



MEMOIRS
OF
LADY WOODFORD.

VOL. I.



I

A

M E M O I R S
O F
LADY WOODFORD.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,
AND ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. I.



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L A D Y W O O D F O R D.

I N consequence of being repeatedly rallied by you, for not giving you some account of the former part of my life, according to promise, I now sit down to be my own historian; and I sit down to write my narrative with pleasure, because I believe that you will find amusement in it. If you are acquainted with any girls in circumstances similar to mine, the perusal of it may, perhaps, afford *them* instruction.

At a very early age was I treated by my mother with a harshness and a neglect which hurt me exceedingly: she never fondled me, she hardly took any notice of me.—I was but too sensible of the unkind treatment I received of her, and fancying that something was wanting in my carriage, I endeavoured, by many little assiduities to attract her attention.—They seldom, indeed, proved successful; yet I persevered, and strove more than ever, by a number of infantine ways, which I thought would be winning, to make her behaviour affectionately maternal.

One day, when I had laid my head in her lap with a childish fondness, she stroked back my hair which, having been neglected, grew quite

over my face, and said, "Look up Fanny—why, you have good eyes, child."

She then examined my hands and arms, and kissed me; and from that hour began to take (apparently at least) some satisfaction at the sight of me. I was, at that time, just entered into my eleventh year, but I had only learnt a little common plain-work and reading, at a petty day-school, in which indeed, I took particular pains to please, because I was ambitious of being distinguished by my mistress, imagining that *her* regard was better than nobody's; but I chiefly wished to be caressed by my mother; and I actually envied several of my school-fellows on finding that they were favourites at home.—My wish was at last accomplished; very soon afterwards my mother sent me to a better school; I learnt French and dancing, and as my lessons were quite agreeable to me, I appeared to advantage in the performance of them.—My mother came to see me dance at a ball given by our master; upon that occasion I had new clothes and finer ones than ever; and I acquitted myself, tho' not till I had felt many awkward sensations, entirely to the satisfaction of my mother and my master.—The latter, indeed, paid more attention to me than I thought was necessary: I was too young, it is true, to understand his meaning, but I was old enough to know that his behaviour was very particular, and it was, certainly, very disagreeable.—My mother, also, observed it, and, by the questions which she asked, made me acquainted with things of which I had till then no idea. I was removed to another school, at which I staid but a little while, for, before I was fourteen, my mother agreed with masters to teach me at home, and I seldom

dom stirred without *her*. I was very much confined, yet I did not feel my confinement intolerable, as I had a great number of amusing books both in French and English, which with my needle and my musick (I was greatly delighted with the latter) filled up my time in a manner that pleas'd me extremely.—I learnt, also, to draw, and to paint in water-colours. The entertainment which I received from my various occupations, was only interrupted by the tiresome injunctions of my mother, with regard to my person; she would never suffer me to stand in the sun: I was obliged to wear gloves always, even when the weather was remarkably hot: my hair was frequently dressed, and my teeth put under the direction of a dentist: all that trouble about me, I thought, was thrown away, as I was not often seen by any body; for, young and ignorant as I was, I soon began to perceive I was dressed in order to be admired, tho' I was principally admired, by my mother, who frequently made me dress myself according to her fancy. After having surveyed me, for about half an hour at a time, she gave me a nod of approbation, and then ordered me to pull off my ornaments, and bury myself in my large cap, handkerchief, and gloves again.—She would also, frequently, ask me questions about the books she had given me, and gennerally recommended those which were most calculated to raise the tender passions: but of her recommendations I took more notice afterwards. She furnished me with many books which treated of love, yet she carefully kept me from the sight of any men, my masters excepted; seldom however leaving me alone even with *them*.

One day being called away while my musick master was teaching me a pathetic song, he seized the moment, and availing himself of her absence, he began to press my hands very warmly, in order, I imagined, to make me feel the beauties of the composition; his efforts had little success, for he excited no emotions in me but emotions of disgust; and the indifference, or rather contempt, with which I beheld him, while I hastily snatched away my hand just when my mother re-entered the room, seemed to give her no small delight. She only took notice, however, of my behaviour to him, by interrogating me about *his* carriage, and never left us together afterwards.

Much in this manner did I spend my time, till I was between fifteen and sixteen.

While I was sitting one morning in my dressing-room, during my mother's absence from home, from the windows of which I could see nothing but our own little garden, and colouring some flowers upon vellum, the maid called to me, and begged me to come into the dining-room, as there was a great quarrel in the street, and as she was afraid that a poor young gentleman would be murdered.

From the girl's account of the affair, I thought I should be very much shocked by going into the dining-room, her repeated intreaties however, added to a curiosity natural in young people, brought me, almost insensibly, to the window.—I then saw a very genteel and handsome young man, endeavouring to defend himself against two or three ill-looking fellows, who wanted to lay violent hands upon him.—The mob took his part: some of them drove his adversaries away, the rest forced him towards our door, which Sally, running

running down, had opened, in spite of all I could say to prevent her committing so indiscreet an action.

The young gentlemen accordingly came in. Sally then shut the door upon the croud, and before I could tell how things had been managed below, *he* entered the dressing room, to which I had retired, through fear; but the same fear had hindered me from making myself private. I stood therefore, rooted to the floor with astonishment; when he made his appearance, without his hat, and with his hair in the greatest disorder:—his hair, disordered as it was, seemed to be very fine; it was of a beautiful chesnut colour: his clothes and linnen were torn, yet there was a charming symmetry in his features, and a gracefulness in his air and manner, which rendered all the above-mentioned little disadvantages too trifling to be regarded. I was certainly struck at the appearance he made, after having been so rudely treated by his enemies, and he looked equally surprized, if not more at the sight of me.—He started immediately, on setting his foot in the room, surveyed me a moment with the greatest attention, and then, advancing to me in the most respectful manner, begged my pardon in the politest terms, for the liberty he had taken in forcing himself into my apartment for shelter: but, at the same time, with very insinuating accents, earnestly desired me to permit him to give me an account of the affair which had occasioned his intrusion, hoping that his narrative would in some measure apologize for his behaviour.

As to myself, I was silent and abashed: I was very sensible that his admission into the house was imprudent, and that tho' I had not

immediately encouraged it, I had done nothing to oppose it; yet I could not help feeling emotions in the young strangers favour: I was silent and confounded—He accordingly, seeing that I made no attempt to lay restraint upon his tongue, began to open his defence.—“Having been rather too free with my last quarters allowance,” said he, “I had only fifty guineas left, which were to have been paid to the persons who sent home some furniture for my apartments, but on meeting with a family in great distress, I could not refrain from assisting them, hoping that those to whom I was indebted would wait a little, when they were acquainted with the cause of my delay: but I was mistaken: for tho’ I described, as feelingly as I could, the distresses of those whom I had relieved, the flinty-hearted tradesmen declared they would stay no longer for their money; in consequence therefore, of *their* resolutions, bailiffs were employed to arrest *me*. The inhumanity of such a proceeding roused my anger, I confess, and urged me to endeavour to baffle their designs, at least, against me. Luckily the mob, believing that I had justice on my side, supported me, and spurred me to seek an asylum in this house, as the door stood invitingly open. I seized that moment to disengage myself from my enemies, but I shall never forgive myself for having given you, madam so much disturbance.”

I know not what answer I returned: I was ready to sink with shame. I was extremely confused: I was, also, prodigiously alarmed, tho’ I could not tell why I was so alarmed. I had no reason, indeed, to believe that

my

my mother would be pleased with the admittance of a young stranger into the house during her absence, yet I was not conscious of having invited him, nor of having given him any encouragement to come into it, tho' I certainly should have freely encouraged him to make it an asylum, had I been mistress of it: being naturally inclined to pity any human creature unfortunately situated. — I should then have been only restrained by apprehensions with regard to the tumultuous behaviour of the mob, till I had received information about the motives.

The young stranger, perceiving me exceedingly embarrassed, and incapable of replying to what he had communicated, concerning himself, approached, very respectfully, the table on which the vellum-drawing lay, which I had begun to colour. — “May I presume madam,” said he, “to look at your performance?”

I made no answer, but, following him, took up the drawing and presented it to him in the best manner I could.

He took it from me, with a genteel air, expressed no small surprize and pleasure at the sight of a picture so judiciously and beautifully executed — (I use his own words) and with a look full of admiration asked me if I acquitted myself in every thing I undertook in the same masterly way.

I blushed at his praises: I thought them too extravagant. I felt myself undeserving of them, yet they gave me a satisfaction which I never felt before: a satisfaction which I could not express?”

“Do you still learn to paint, madam?”

“I do not learn at this time Sir,” replied I; “the person who taught me left England

about a month ago, in order to reside in Italy."

He then took out his watch, shook his head, and with a sigh, asked me if I would permit him to wait on me sometimes, to pay his grateful acknowledgments for the shelter I had afforded him.

I answered that I had never any visitors unknown to my mother, and that as she was not at home I could say nothing to his request.

"Only say," replied he, with a very particular expression in his eyes and voice, "that my seeing you now and then, will not be disagreeable to yourself, and I will be contented at present."

He took my hand while he spoke these words, and by so doing threw me into a second embarrassment, but an embarrassment much more pleasing than the first was.—For some moments I had no answer ready for him; during my hesitation he kept his eyes fixed on me, and pressed my hand to his bosom.

To deliver myself, at length, from importunities which began to make me very awkwardly uneasy, I told him, that as I had never seen him before, I was not able to return an answer to his question.—"It is almost impossible, Sir," added I, "for people, on so short an acquaintance, to know whether they are agreeable to each other or not."

"I am sorry," said he, with another sigh, that I have not been so fortunate as to make an impression upon *you*, deep as that which you have made on me, with your charming person, fine accomplishments, and amiable manners: however, if you will but say that you discern nothing in me to create disgust, I will hope that, upon a nearer acquaintance, my

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my efforts to please may be *not disagreeable*, at least, to you."

He then, before I was aware of his design, raised my hands to his lips, and kissed it.

As soon as he had quitted the room, my first wish was to call him back; my heart, already too partial in his favour, accused me of a failure in point of hospitality: but the fear of being thought too forward, hindered me from acting agreeably to the innocent impulses of my inclination.—I ran to the window to see if those who had attempted to detain him had withdrawn themselves, and felt as if I had discovered both ill-nature and ill-breeding by not having asked him to stay till I was sure his pursuers were quite gone.

The crowd was dispersed, but I waited, in vain, to see *him* who, I soon found, engrossed my thoughts.—I remained at the window till my eyes were fatigued with looking at the various objects in the street, and then called Sally, who gave me an opportunity to be very inquisitive, by telling me that the gentleman had escaped from one of the kitchen windows which opened into the *court*, as he believed that he should, by so leaving the house, elude the search of those who might be watching for him.

I was pleased to hear that he had taken so much care of himself, tho' I was still uneasy, because I had not thought of detaining him till he might get away safely, but upon my disclosing my sentiments about this subject to Sally, she told me, that I had more reason to be satisfied with his departure than discontented about it.—"Tis better as it is, Madam," added she, "if my mistress had come home

she might have been very angry, and we shall have the gentlemen here again I'll lay my life."

I did not, I confess, thoroughly, comprehend her meaning, but I felt a secret pleasure arising from what she had uttered.

In this state was I when my mother came home; rather lost in reflections upon what had just passed.

As soon as I could recover myself a little, I told my mother what had happened: I did not, indeed, acquaint her with every particular, I only informed her that a young gentleman ran into our house to get out of the hands of some ill-looking men in the street.—I related the simple fact faithfully; I should have related, with the same fidelity, every incident which had happened during her absence. Yet I presently found that the intelligence I had imparted to her was not, in *her* opinion, of a trifling nature, by the number of her interrogations, which I answered as well as I could: I made no false disclosures, but I did not dwell minutely upon every circumstance, as I do now for *your* amusement.—I was cautious—tho' I hardly knew at that time why I was so—I scorned to impose upon my mother, yet I thought it not at all necessary to load my narrative with the repetition of trivial circumstances.

The next day my mother scarce left me a moment—Sally, however, found an opportunity to slip a letter into my hand, unseen by *her*, I took it, but as I did not know her meaning. I asked her what it was.

"A letter," replied she, whispering; "read it in a moment before my mistress comes in from the garden."

"Why

"Why this hurry?" said I: "from whom did you receive it?" added I, with an air of indifference.

Irritated by that indifference, she cried, "Lord help me, how can you stand asking so many questions, when there is no time to lose? your mother will be in before you can get half way through it."

"I can read it as well," replied I, "when she is here, as when she is absent."

"But you must not," answered she peevishly: "she will be angry with you, and you will be sorry, by and bye, to find that you have not read it by yourself."

Thus urged, I at last complied and opened my letter: it contained a declaration which was conveyed in very elegant, and very impassioned terms. I coloured as I read on, and my heart fluttered; yet I was not a little pleased to find myself so tenderly addressed by a man, whom I thought, tho' I had seen him but once, extremely agreeable.

The artful Sally, more intelligent than I was, saw immediately the impression which the letter had made on me, and pressed me to answer it without delay: "That is," added she, "as soon as my mistress leaves you alone."

"And why may I not answer it when my mother is with me, supposing I am to answer it at all?"

"Lord bless me, Miss," cried she, "you are enough to make any body mad; why you know as well as I, that my mistress will be angry with us all."

"It would be wrong then, to answer it, Sally."

"Was

“ Was ever any thing like you ?” said she, hastily : “ there are a great many things which my mistress does not approve of, and yet there is no harm in them—People think differently.”

“ Yes:—You and my mother may think differently ; but it is better for my mother and me, perhaps, to think alike.”

Sally now began to lose all patience, especially as she heard my mother coming. With looks full of the greatest discontent—“ Well then Miss, I beg, at least, that you will not say any thing to my mistress about the letter.”

“ Here then, take the letter,” replied I, “ holding it out to her.”

You will be surprized, my dear friend, at my so easily parting with my letter, the first of the kind I had ever received, and in every respect sufficient to gratify my vanity : but not to make myself appear in a false light, I must honestly confess, that I really did not know in what manner to answer my lover’s affectionate epistle, and that I really had a particular aversion to all kinds of deceit—I therefore gave it up, but I will sincerely own, that I more than once wished for a sight of it again, so very insinuating is flattery to a young mind.—However, though I really longed to read all the fine things which were written about me, all the well-turned-compliments to my person, to my manners, &c. &c. I had courage enough peremptorily to resist all Sally’s persuasions ; and at last to tell her, that if she spoke another word upon the subject, I would acquaint my mother with her impertinence.

To make myself amends, in some measure, for this little sacrifice, I indulged myself in stealing many looks in the glass, to see if my little person any way deserved the fine encomiums

miums which had been so liberally bestowed upon it: and, to say truth, I not only went away extremely well satisfied with it, but returned, several times, to it, to survey my whole figure, because I was partial enough to my own beauty, to believe that my lover had not in the least flattered me.—Emotions, similar to those which I then felt, agitate the bosom of every girl, I fancy, when she first finds herself admired; and you may ask your own heart, Maria, if they are not natural.

When I had sufficiently enjoyed the sensations arising from the survey of my personal charms, I reflected upon my ingenuity in tracing and colouring those flowers which my admirer had so highly commended, and the remembrance of his commendations gave me so much delight, that I wished to hear them repeated: I, therefore, told my mother, one day, that my drawing, when it was finished, would appear, I thought, to advantage, hung up in the parlour.

“Ay, Fanny,” replied she, “when it is really finished: you draw and colour pretty well for the time you have learnt, but I intend to have you receive further instruction before you exhibit your performances, when I meet with a master to my mind.”

This speech happened to be delivered when Sally was present, from whom I had not heard any more about my young gentleman.

The next day my mother was called down to a person who came to offer his service as a drawing-master.—In less than half an hour she came and told me that she had agreed with Mr. Bendish, who was to come the following morning at eleven.

When

When I went to this new master, I was struck at the sight of him; I was exceedingly surprised, for he strongly resembled in his features and stature, air and manner, the young gentleman who had taken refuge in our house; but then that fine hair which so gracefully shaded his face, was no longer to be seen; a large brown bob wig was, apparently, the only covering to his head, and a flouching ill-made great coat, hanging loose about him, prevented me from distinguishing his shape; with an unruffled shirt, with a pair of dirty gloves, and with a suitableness throughout his whole dress, his figure was destitute of all gentility; still, however there was a captivating something about him which put me in mind of my admirer, and indeed the resemblance was so glaring, that I could not help blushing when my eyes encountered his: and I could not persuade myself that I had never seen him before.

The moment he spoke, all my uncertainty about him was at an end; but my astonishment and my confusion were increased: I became, however, less and less embarrassed in his company, as he conversed in a manner perfectly easy and engaging both with my mother and with me: and the instructions which he gave me, intermixed with encomiums on my taste and genius, soon rendered me as free from stiffness as he himself was.—Nothing tends more to give us that decent assurance so necessary in our commerce with the world, as self-satisfaction; but that satisfaction can only be well founded when it arises from the praises bestowed upon us by people of judgment.

My mother, who seemed to be as highly pleased with Mr. Bendish as I was, declared, when he was gone, that she had a very good
opinion

opinion of his abilities; but added, that she wondered why a man so capable of teaching to *draw*, should chuse to appear in so mean a dress.—“ I cannot suppose that he wants employment,” continued she, “ he must therefore be either idle or extravagant: if he is idle he will never take the trouble to get money, and if he is extravagant, he will squander what he receives: he will, consequently, be needy, and needy people are always dangerous in a house: we must, therefore, have an eye upon him, while he comes hither.—His visits, however, to this house will not be frequent, as you will learn more under *his* direction in a month, than with a man less qualified in his profession in a year.”

I could not help inwardly agreeing with my mother most cordially, I own, though I gave my assent to what she had uttered with an awkward sort of a smile; as awkwardly I told her that, with such a master, much might be learnt in a little time.

Luckily for me though she is, in general, very penetrating, she did not comprehend the full meaning of my reply.

As soon as Sally came into the room, she darted a significant glance at me.—When we were by ourselves she said, “ There, Miss, now I hope you will believe that Mr. Seymount—(that was the name which concluded his letter) is sincerely in love with you, since he has disguised himself on purpose to get into the house, that he may see you, and speak to you.”

I took the hint, and instantly replied, with as grave a face as I could put on,—“ Pray Sally, how came you to fancy that Mr. Bendish is Mr. Seymount? For my part, I confess, I
never

never saw two people more different from each other."

"Ah! Miss Fanny," cried the girl, "you very well know, that the only difference between them lies in the appearance."

I made no answer; I had, already, learnt a little cunning: besides, I did not chuse, outwardly, to join with the maid in imposing upon my mother. I knew that I had not invited Mr. Seymount to come and see me, either in his own dress, or disguised, and therefore was not accountable for the consequences.—His person and conversation, indeed, gave me so much pleasure, that I could not wish for the prohibition of his visits; and, as long as I felt that I was not chargeable with the introduction of him as a drawing master, I thought I might, innocently, enjoy the agreeable sensations arising from them with propriety; and while I made no attempt to gratify the wishes of my heart indiscreetly, I firmly believed, that no inconveniences could result from the deception with regard to Mr. Seymount's appearance.

Mr. Seymount hourly improved upon me as a companion, and I made hourly improvements under him as a master: I applied myself so closely to my drawing and painting, that I could scarce fail of making a considerable progress in them. He also attempted to render me sensible of the tender passion.—My mother watched us both very narrowly, but she did not, I fancy, entertain any suspicions concerning my lover, so dexterous was he in the management of his looks, and in the conveyance of his notes. Often did he steal the most significant glances at me, and often, in a moment for which he had waited with the utmost impatience, pressed

ed my hand unperceived, or whispered something soft in my ear, or made some sign which discovered what he wished to communicate to me.—I was by no means a dull scholar in any shape, yet, in order to quicken my comprehension, he, on the second day of his coming found an opportunity to slip a letter into my hand, in which he again informed me of the violence of his passion; among many tender and flattering passages in it, were the following ones,—“You must surely be convinced of my sincere attachment to you, as I have disguised myself on purpose to gain admittance to you.—My father is determined never to consent to my marrying any woman who has not a large fortune, but I solemnly declare, that I can feel tender sentiments for you alone; and as I knew that your mother would not permit me to visit you till I had it in my power to support my pretensions; as I was, also, unable to live without you, I pitched upon a method which promised success, and I have, hitherto, luckily succeeded.—I have only to wish that your sensations in my favour may be equal to mine in yours. Accept my best acknowledgement for not unmasking me to your mother, and for encouraging my endeavours to render myself agreeable to you.”

The other passages were chiefly of the complimentary kind: but such compliments, Maria—sufficient to turn the head, if not touch the heart of a young girl of my age, who was not void of sensibility.—However, not all his attentions and assiduities, too artfully calculated to gain upon the mind of a young person who had never been treated with
such

such high adulation before, could make me so far forget myself, as to return any answer to his letter in writing; but I will honestly own that I, more than once, wished discretion would have warranted a written reply to it, as I thought he had, by condescending to disguise himself merely for the sake of seeing me, given a very strong proof of his passion for me.

By persevering in my prudential resolution, I made him at length really unhappy; he certainly, appeared to be so, and the change in his countenance left me no room to suppose that my eyes were mistaken.—He looked exceedingly dejected, sighed frequently, and seemed to be actually in a very agitated state.—The anxiety of his mind, strongly visible, was rendered still less disputable by the fretfulness and petulance which he often discovered in my company: the pencil and the colours frequently extorted peevish expressions from him, and sometimes such expressions were directed to me, tho' I could perceive that he strove to correct himself whenever he had too hastily thrown them out—I was not offended at them myself, I looked upon them as proofs of his sincerity, but they had a different effect upon my mother.—While he was polite, and even gallant in his behaviour, she appeared to be alarmed, and never left us together; the moment he grew dejected and peevish, she was off her guard, and believed that there was nothing to apprehend.—(How often are the most sagacious people mistaken, just when they are paying themselves the highest compliments upon their penetration?) She went about her family affairs, therefore, without any suspicions.

One day, when we were by ourselves, Mr. Seymount threw himself at my feet, and with
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all the signs of a real passion in his countenance, with all the eloquence of a man truly enamoured, with all the impatience of a man eager to be drawn out of a state of the most perplexing uncertainty, he entreated me only to say whether I thought it possible for me ever to think of him in the manner he wished.—The language in which he delivered his sentiments in my favour, the anxiety which disturbed his fine features, his faltering voice, and the tremor through his whole frame, sufficiently convinced me, that he loved me. I was not so weak as to suppose that, after so short an acquaintance, he could have a sincere esteem for me.—However, his behaviour was so affecting, that I could not behold him with indifference.

As I was naturally modest, and had acquired nice ideas about discretion, I was silent.

To oblige me to speak, he seized both my hands, and pressed them, alternately, to his lips; I did not withdraw them, because I did not think there was any harm in his holding them a little while, and because I was not willing to deprive him of the satisfaction which he seemingly enjoyed.

In this situation we remained some time, how long we should have remained in it, I cannot say, if my mother, quite unexpected, I am sure, by us both, had not entered the room.

She started back a few paces, lifted up her hands and eyes with astonishment, and coloured like scarlet.

Seymour rose precipitately.

“It is very well, Sir,” said she—“I did not, I own, expect this behaviour, but as I may
thank

thank you for letting *me* into your secret, I shall not divulge it.—I shall only tell you, that you come no more to this house. As to my daughter, I shall, undoubtedly, make *her* sensible of the impropriety of her conduct, oblige her to return to her duty, and—”

“Ah, Madam,” cried he, interrupting her; “hear me a moment—I dare believe that you will pardon what is past.—But should you think you have reason to be offended with *me*, let me prevail on you to exculpate Miss Wanley, for she has in no shape deserved your anger or resentment on *my* account.—I loved her, Madam, the first instant chance threw me in her way: and you may easily suppose that it was impossible for me not to love her more upon a nearer acquaintance.—But as I am so unfortunately circumstanced, at present, as not to be able to offer my hand—my father not having yet made me independent—I thought I might, with propriety, endeavour to secure her affections, especially, as I was, at the same time, trying to secure a fortune worthy of her acceptance. However, as I well know that such a public avowal of my passion, if it should reach my father’s ears, (who thinks a woman with a small fortune no object for me) would retard the allowance which I wished to obtain for her sake alone, and as I dared not to expect the admission of my visits to Miss Wanley, till they were authorized by my father’s approbation, or till I became my own master; being also utterly unable to exist in a state of suspense with regard to Miss Wanley’s opinion, I availed myself of the first moment you left me alone with her, to plead my passion—I pleaded for a favourable answer, but you came in before any answer was returned: so that I am still up-
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on the rack of uncertainty.—Permit your amiable daughter, therefore Madam, to decide my fate in *your* presence.”

He then cast the most imploring looks at *me*.—Equally ashamed, and intimidated, I stood with my eyes fixed upon the floor, without uttering a single syllable.

My mother hastily answered for me—“I am willing to believe, Sir, that my daughter, has been, hitherto, discreet, and I will do my utmost endeavours to keep her so.—Go, child, go up to your chamber immediately, and stay till I send for you.”

I made a low curtsy, expressive of obedience, to my mother, and another to Mr. Seymount, with which I strove to make grateful acknowledgments for all the fine things he had said to me.

Just as I turned to leave the room he stopped me; laid his hand gently on mine, and with a look at my mother, the most significant imaginable, cried, “Ah! Madam! do not send her away till she has declared whether she can bestow her affections upon me when it is in my power to solicit that blessing in a proper manner.”

“When that day arrives, Sir,” replied my mother, with a peremptory tone, “it will be time enough for you to speak to her about her answer.—Leave us directly”—continued she, sternly, to me.

“Do not speak harshly to her,” said Seymount, “do not chide her on my account: if there is any thing wrong in my being here, *she* has, certainly no share in it: let her not, therefore, suffer a moment’s uneasiness for *me*.”

“Go

"Go girl—go—" cried my mother, still more angrily.

More touched by my lover's pleadings for me, than by any part of his preceding carriage, I left the room, and left *him* with the reluctance which I could neither conquer nor conceal, from my mother, at least.

My mother, coming, soon afterwards into my apartment, found me in tears.

"And so you are weak enough," said she, "to cry for this man; a man who cannot feel the smallest regard for you: a man who, like too many of his sex, pursues you only for your destruction; and you are not capable of seeing through his designs, or else are simple enough to be taken in by his smooth looks and insinuating speeches.—This comes, child, from your ignorance; were you to see Mr. Seymount in a right light, you would, I dare say, be cured of of your foolish fancy for him:—but come, wipe away your tears, and tell me every thing that has passed between you: by nothing, except a faithful relation of this silly affair, can you atone for the encouragement you have given Mr. Seymount without my approbation."

"Indeed," replied I, blushing, "I have not encouraged him."

"No?" answered she—"What; did you not encourage him when you listened to him? With regard to our commerce with men, Fanny, there are but two ways of acting, a right and a wrong one. She who suffers a lover to make his addresses to her, gives him sufficient encouragement: but come; begin."

I obeyed, and spoke the truth.—Having mentioned the receipt of two letters my mother hastily desired to see them.

Trembling

Trembling with shame, I drew them from my pocket and gave them to her, trying, at the same time, to hide my tears, and to dry them with my handkerchief.

When she had perused them with attention, she coolly put them into her pocket, and, looking earnestly at me, said, "And so you cry, child, because I have prevented a man from imposing on you, instead of thanking me for my care of you? you actually grieve at my saving you from ruin?"

By this time I had gained a little courage. "As Mr. Seymount, Madam, behaved to me in the most obliging manner, I could not help being sorry to see him roughly treated."

"Roughly, do you call it, Miss? Did I, by desiring a man whose company is, by no means, proper for you, to come no more to the house, treat him roughly? But you are a simpleton, and don't know any better yet.—What you call an obliging manner is only flattery: all men entertain young women with flattering language; it costs them nothing: it frequently, however, makes too deep an impression upon weak minds, as it soothes our vanity and self-love, two passions ever eager to be gratified. We are naturally inclined to like those who seem to feel an inclination for us, and—"

"Is not such a propensity in us laudable?" said I, interrupting her with a spirit of which I did not think myself capable—"Whom should we love but those who love us?"

My mother stared at me.—I was not a little surprized at myself, but I felt a kind esteem for Mr. Seymount, rising from gratitude, for his consideration on my account, and under the impulse of that emotion was, perhaps, unbecomingly

unbecomingly bold in my behaviour, yet I thought, at the same time, that I barely did Mr. Seymount justice by my spirited carriage.

My mother soon replied in a tone and manner which silenced me—"Parents and guardians are," said she, "the only persons to be first consulted upon these occasions. It cannot be properly said, that Mr. Seymount has made any proposal to me on your account, because he is dependent on his father, and because his father will not render him otherwise, unless he consents to marry a woman with a large fortune.—Think no more of him, therefore; he ought never to be thought on by you for many reasons: besides, supposing him to be a proper person for you, can you imagine that such forwardness will not disgust him? The way to win men is to keep them in pursuit; the pleasure of the chase is at an end when the game is taken."

This last observation of my mother's hurt me more than any thing she had said. I was so much pained to be, tho' indirectly, charged with having discovered too great a fondness for a man almost a stranger to me, that I absolutely shrunk within myself and retired, covered with confusion, determining, whatever it cost me, to give no farther encouragement to Mr. Seymount, should he solicit me ever so much. On second thoughts, however, I concluded that if he was really the man my mother had described, he would naturally avoid me as a girl unworthy of his attention.—This reflection drew a flood of tears from my eyes.—Yet I wept more for the imputation of indelicacy, than for the absence of my lover.—My mother's satirical inuendo, with regard to my forwardness, made me extremely miserable, and I
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resolved to behave with the greatest reserve when any men fell in my way.—I forgot to tell you that, upon my mother's enquiring how I came by the letters—for I had never been accustomed to disguise the truth—she suspected Sally: Sally was therefore instantly discharged, and another maid supplied her place.—I was sorry to be under a necessity of making Sally suspected, but I always abhorred deceit, and could not think of joining with her in imposing upon my mother.

A few days after we were settled again, my mother ordered me to dress myself to go out, and, having sent for a coach, bade the man drive to Kensington Gardens. The pleasantness of the evening, and the different sets of company scattered up and down the walks, afforded me great entertainment, but I thought too much of Mr. Seymount, not to wish that he had been by my side, and not to sigh for his appearance.—More than once was I in hopes of meeting him *en passant*, but when I found myself disappointed—(tho' I had not any reason to expect the sight of him) I became dejected, and made very short answers to every thing my mother said to me.

At last we met with an old gentleman whom I had never seen before. My mother called him Sir Thomas. He accosted us with a great deal of politeness, and surveyed me from head to foot with an attention, which would have considerably disgusted me, had I not been thinking about quite a different man.

When the Baronet had finished his examination of my person, and taken off his eyes, my curiosity led me to take a view of *his*.—He was very tall, and genteely made, but stooped a little from his age; his features were

all elegant, and I dare say his complexion had been naturally a fine one, but it appeared, at that time, the complexion of art—His face was smooth, but disagreeably so, and the glossiness upon it evidently resulted from a cosmetick wash. His teeth were, apparently, false ones, and they did not, in my opinion, make him look younger. This antiquated, patched-up figure, however, soon attached himself to me, and strove, by numberless civilities and assiduities to please me; but in vain did he attempt to give me pleasure. How offensive are the efforts of the old, to shine in parts in which the young only play with any propriety?

We walked till I was quite weary of my venerable admirer, and not at all satisfied with the behaviour of my mother: they would have been both glad, most probably, to have seated themselves, so tired were they—not of each other's company, but of the exercise.

Sir Thomas, perceiving, by our looks, that we wished to sit down, asked my mother if he should order his coach to come up to the den-gate.

On her assenting to his proposal, he handed us in, and bade the coachman to drive home.

We stopped in Grosvenor-square.

As I knew nothing of the design concerted between Sir Thomas and my mother, I was surprized at our entrance into a magnificent house. The lofty stair-case, the suit of rooms, pictures, glasses, girandoles, vases, carpets; in short, every object I saw attracted my attention.—Yet, as I found myself extremely unwilling to be pleased with the Baronet, or with any thing belonging to him, I was inclined to repress my astonishment, or my satisfaction—He was plainly upon the watch for both, and
looked

looked at me as if he wished to read them in my countenance. Early in life I scorned deceit, but I thought it very allowable, almost meritorious, to conceal sensations from Sir Thomas, which, if discovered, might have given him more pleasure than he was worthy of enjoying.—He did not appear to be an object deserving of my esteem, most certainly he had no attractions to excite my love. However, a lover he endeavoured to be, and omitted nothing to induce me to look upon him in a favourable light. All his little tenderneſſes only ſerved to render him doubly ridiculous in my eyes; and as he was really a man wholly disagreeable to me, I chagrined him not a little (his chagrin was ſufficiently obſervable) by the coolneſs, and by the indifference with which I behaved to him.

When we had ſupped in the moſt elegant taſte, my mother and I got again into the old gentleman's coach, and returned home.

While we were going home, my mother asked me, if I did not think Sir Thomas Combes a very fine gentleman, and a very agreeable man.

“ I allow him to be a very fine gentleman,” replied I, “ according to the notions which many people have of that character, but I cannot allow him to be an agreeable man.”

“ You cannot?—upon my word you are exceſſively nice, Miſs, and mighty particular in your opinion, for Sir Thomas is generally thought to be one of the moſt agreeable men in the world.”

I coloured at this reproof: and was the more uneaſy, becauſe I imagined that ſomething would happen, from the Kenſington interview, to give me no ſmall diſquietude.

I retired to bed as soon as I could, but in a very restless situation. A thousand disturbing reflections followed each other rapidly in my mind—During the greatest part of the night I was hindered, by those reflections, from sleeping—Towards morning, I fell into a pleasing slumber, and did not wake from it till the maid came to tell me, that Sir Thomas was below, and that they waited breakfast for me.

I rose exceedingly out of humour.

Before I had been able to rouse my spirits, my mother hurried into my room, wondering how I could lay in bed so long, and bade me make haste, and take care to dress myself to the best advantage. She ordered me, at the same time, what gown to put on, it was the best I had, and I felt inexpressible uneasiness upon the occasion, because I conjectured from her being so ready to let me appear *dressed* before breakfast, that she had no design herself to make an addition to my wardrobe—However, tho' I dared not absolutely to disobey her, I was so much pained at the thoughts of making a parading appearance so early in the day, that I ventured to try that if I could prevail on her to let me come down in one of my common gowns: but to no purpose. My opposition, the gentlest to be conceived, only served to give force to the storm of anger gathering against me.—I therefore complied: but I made them wait a considerable time.—I would not, on any account, have been so dilatory, had my mother been alone, but every kind of delay which kept me from Sir Thomas, gave me pleasure.

At last after having received a very pressing message from my mother, I entered the parlour.

The

The old gentleman arose up in an ecstatic manner to receive me, but was not a little checked, in the midst of his raptures by the solemnity of my face, and the very respectful curtsy which I made him—(such a curtsy as I should naturally have made my great grandfather, had I known him) somewhat disconcerted him.—However, he accosted me with a lively familiarity.

Drawing back on a sudden, I beheld my old lover in a very ridiculous light.—He started, and actually capered with surprise: but his looks were by no means so brisk as his feet.

“What’s the matter with the girl this morning?” cried my mother, with a frown, “come sit down; you hinder Sir Thomas from taking his breakfast.”

I replied, that I would on no account disturb the gentleman, and walked, most maliciously, to the other side of the breakfast table, tho’ he placed a chair close by his own for me. I was not indeed much better off by the removal of myself. I avoided his touch indeed, which was extremely odious to me, but by fixing his monstrous large eyes on me the whole time I sat opposite to him, he put me every moment out of countenance: and his indelicate encomiums on my person, increased my confusion so much that I could neither look up, nor enjoy the least satisfaction: my eyes and ears were both grossly affronted by him.—

“What a lovely profile is there! what a fine rising bosom!—how delicious the moisture of those ruby lips! what a charming languishing down cast of her eye!” Such was his language, but his looks were, beyond expression, disgusting, and would not bear the inter-

pretation which, ignorant as I was, I could not help putting upon them.

Soon after breakfast, my mother rose to leave the room.—I followed her, trembling, lest I should be stopped.—My fears were not groundless.—Sir Thomas caught my hand, and my mother, in a commanding tone cried, “Stay where you are.”

I coloured, hung down my head, and was conducted back to my chair by the Baronet, who, perceiving that so violent freedoms rather frightened than allured me, assumed a more decent, and proper carriage. He entered into conversation with me, and indeed, if I had heard what he said to me in other accents, and unaccompanied with amorous twinklings, I should have pronounced him to be an entertaining man.

In about half an hour my mother returned, and told me that I might go to my drawing. I obeyed her with pleasure.

Just when I was sitting down with my pencil in my hand, I recollected that a little flower-piece, which hung in the back parlour, wanted a few touches.

As soon as I entered the room softly, fearful of being dragged back again to my venerable admirer, if discovered—I heard Sir Thomas say “Marry her madam? you cannot expect me to marry a girl whom nobody knows, of no family, no fortune?—that will never do—No—I think a *thousand* down, with five hundred a year, is a very good offer, and if you do not like it, why you are at liberty to make a better bargain where you can: but I protest I do not know the man who will give you half a crown more: a thousand pound is a great deal of money, Mrs. Wanley.”

“Why

"Why sure, Sir 'Thomas, you would not have me sell my child?"

"As to that, Madam, you know best your own affairs; for my part, I have not been used to treat in the mercantile manner, I don't understand trade: I think your daughter a d—d fine girl: you only say a few civil things of me to her, and I present this bank note to you as a *douceur*; that's all, my dear madam; there is nothing more in it, upon my honour."

You may imagine, my dear friend, how I felt when I heard this curious dialogue—I stood quite confounded, almost petrified, rooted to the floor.

My mother hesitated to make a reply to Sir Thomas's last speech.

As soon as I had recovered myself a little, I could not help pouring out my grateful thanks to Providence, for having thrown me into the way of being acquainted with the cruel, unnatural, abominable design forming against me.—It was not in the least surprizing, that a man of Sir Thomas's principles, should endeavour to seduce the girl who had struck his eye; but that a mother should seem willing to part with her child upon dishonourable terms, prompted by lucrative motives—Astonishing! Yet such a mother was mine: She hesitated for some moments, but at last closed with the offered terms.—The old dotard took an infinite deal of pains to make her look upon the *agreement* between them in a fair light.

I cannot describe the sensations I felt, when I heard the time appointed for the delivery of me up to infamy, which was to be when Sir 'Thomas had got the abstract of a settlement of five hundred a year during my life, ready to be signed.—Nothing could equal the horror

which seized me, when I heard the conclusion of so scandalous a bargain.—However, I had something else to do than to indulge reflections, which might have rendered me incapable of saving myself from the threatened destruction.

As soon as I recovered a little from my amazement, I burst into a flood of tears.—When I had wiped them away, fearing I should make a discovery, I returned to my chamber, to consider of the most proper steps to take to extricate myself out of so dangerous a situation.—The more I ruminated upon my ineligible condition, the more was I at a loss how to act. My mother had always lived in a retired way: that is, we did not see much company: and among those who came to the house, she suffered me to contract no intimacies; to whom, therefore, could I apply? Surely not to a stranger! Besides, young and unexperienced as I was, I had, already at an early age, seen that there was hardly any confidence, to be placed in men: I will honestly own, however, that I several times thought of Saymount; I had indeed, affected to disbelieve all my mother's insinuations against him; yet I more than once, fancied that her suspicions might be well grounded, but his flattering carriage to me, added to his amiable manners, and agreeable person, made a little impression upon me, tho' it could not be said that I was actually in love with him:—*that* impression was, undoubtedly, strengthened by the contrast between him and my antiquated lover, not only in their age, and external appearance, but in their principles. Sir Thomas had positively declared that he would not marry me; Mr. Seymount had assured my mother that it was
his

his design to make me his wife.—However, as I had neither heard of him, nor seen him, from the time he made that declaration, I had some inducement to believe that *he* might be as unwilling to marry as the Baronet was: but supposing Seymount to have been ready to take me under his protection, should I not have acted madly, by trusting to him?—What measures to take, therefore, I could not tell—There was no hoping to move my mother. A woman who had listened to a proposal for the prostitution of her daughter, would have been, most probably, deaf to all that daughter's intreaties.

I sat ruminating upon the difficult part I had to perform, till I was almost wild: while I was so engaged, my mother came up stairs from Sir Thomas.

Bursting in my room, she cried, “Hey, child, what is the matter?—what are you crying your eyes out for?”

I actually blushed at her assurance: I was hurt to see her so chearful, after having been guilty of an action which ought to have filled her with the most cutting remorse.

I made no reply at first; I was indeed kept silent both by grief and indignation.

The repetition of her questions, with another more galling one added to them, roused me.

“Are you whimpering after Seymount?”

I then had spirit enough to say—“I have not been weeping upon his account, madam; but I believe I shall always prefer him to Sir Thomas.”

“You think you shall!” replied my mother, with a kind of sneer—“but really, Fanny, if you will take my advice, you had better not give him the preference, for the discovery of

it may occasion you more trouble than you are at present aware of: and you will soon find it more prudent to forget Mr. Seymount, and to employ your whole time in studying to please Sir Thomas."

My lips were sealed—I plainly perceived that I should only talk to no purpose by opening them, and therefore dried up my tears as well as I could.—My mother, as I continued silent, soon left me.

The moment she was gone out of my room, I fastened the door, and throwing myself on my knees, humbly and ardently besought the Almighty, the guardian of the innocent, to deliver me from the distressful situation to which I was destined by a mercenary mother; a situation, from which no human being, I thought, could save me.

By addressing myself to the protector of the orphan—I felt myself an orphan in the most melancholy sense of the word, as my father had been long dead, and as my mother had ceased to be a parent—I calmed my disturbed mind a little: but the more I reflected upon my mother's behaviour, the more was I shocked at it, and the less able to account for it. Had I, in any shape, injured her, she might have been provoked to be my enemy; she would have had some plea for her carriage, if I had been undutiful or a vicious daughter; she would have been naturally enough induced to get rid of such a daughter, tho' she could not have made a rational excuse for disposing of her in a shameful manner—My condition was the more pitiable, and the more distressing, as I knew not where to apply for assistance.

After much consideration, I at last determined to try to move Sir Thomas himself in

my

my favour : but on second thoughts I altered my resolution : imagining that a man who could bring himself to give a thousand pounds for the gratification of a lawless passion would not pay much attention to any thing I could say in opposition to it, and that I could not safely trust myself in his power.—I was doubly convinced of the impropriety of such a step very soon afterwards.

Sir Thomas made a second visit the next day. My mother left me a considerable time with him, tho' I had made a great many objections to such a proceeding. He then took liberties which were very offensive, and even terrifying ; however, they infused spirit enough in me, to tell him that they should never be repeated, tho' my life depended upon my refusal.

He actually stared to hear me talk to him in an eager and angry tone about his behaviour, and endeavoured to pacify me, to soften me to his infamous purpose, by calling me " little, trembling fool, and pretty blushing charmer," and such stuff : but I flew from him.—I was roundly reprimanded, indeed, by my mother, who, taking me by the hand, attempted to lead me down to him again, yet I hung back with all the strength in my power, and protested I would see him no more.

At this protestation of mine, my mother seemed to be very much alarmed : after having called me a ridiculous chit, she went down stairs by herself.

I slipped softly after her into the back parlour and overheard her tell Sir Thomas that he had been too violent, and that he must stay till he got me quite in his own power before he proceeded to such lengths.—" Indeed, Sir,
Thomas

Thomas," added she, "I cannot have any disturbance in *my* house, nor give encouragement to any suspicions—What do you imagine the neighbours will think? No, no, pray be quiet till the girl is under your own care; you may then, safely, do what you please with her."

They then proceeded to lay the plan for my being delivered up. To prevent a refractory carriage on my part, and to occasion no injurious conjectures among the neighbours, my mother and I were to go sixty miles out of town in a hired post chaise: we were to discharge *that*, and hire another to carry us ten miles across the country, to a house belonging to Sir Thomas, the house destined for my ruin.—I had, therefore no time to lose.

Not knowing whom to trust, or whither to go, I, the next morning, put some of my best and finest linen into my pocket, and making up some of the rest of my cloaths in as large a bundle as I could carry, took the first opportunity my mother gave me, by her absence from home, to find some employment for the maid, and while she was too much employed to observe me, walked into the street.

Into the street I walked, but in such agitation, that I could scarce set one foot before the other—How to dispose of myself I was utterly at a loss—I could not live upon air; I could not sleep exposed to the elements. It was absolutely necessary for me to think of somebody who might be willing either to take me in, or to put me in a way of getting a temporary asylum. I could not apply to a stranger, and I was afraid of venturing myself in the hands of my mother's friends, lest they should betray me.

With

With these reflections rolling in my mind, I walked on: yet they did not prevent my attention to the business of the moment. Not having been much accustomed to walk by myself, I was not a little embarrassed and fluttered by the observations which were made upon me.—I was not over dressed, indeed, but I made so genteel an appearance, that the bundle which I carried seemed to be an unsuitable part of it.—The men said civil things to me as they passed: The women drew up their heads with contemptuous sneers, looking very disdainfully both at me and my bundle. Galled by so ungenerous a behaviour in my own sex, and apprehensive that the other would take unbecoming liberties with me, I redoubled my steps, in order to get out of the reach of both, tho' I had no particular point of security in view.

While I was hurrying along, I met an elderly gentlewoman whom I had seen at my mother's, but who was not yet very intimate with her.

She stopped me, however, and asked me, whither I was going with my bundle.

That question roused me, and made me still more sensible of my forlorn and helpless condition.

I looked up, and burst into tears.

"What makes you cry, child?" replied she.

"O madam," answered I, sobbing, "let me go home with you, and I will tell you all."

I could not utter any more words.

She appeared astonished, and looked rather cool at me; but tho' my delicacy was great, my distress was greater: besides, I had no time to be ceremonious—I trembled lest I should be dragged

dragged back to my mother, or to Sir Thomas, and pressed the old gentlewoman to make haste; but as she was neither of an age, nor of a disposition to pay any regard to my precipitation, she crept along in her usual snail-pace, while I walked sometimes before, in hopes of animating her to follow me, and sometimes even with her, that I might prevail on her to quicken her motion.—But to very little purpose were all my stimulating endeavours.

We, at last, arrived at her house.—I then, told her my story in the best manner I could; tho' you may be sure I was very loth to expose my mother. Mrs. Burdet, indeed, saved me the pain I must have felt by such an exposure, for she plainly informed me, that she believed I had accused my mother falsely, on purpose to execute some scheme of my own, and that she would either acquaint my mother with my design, or not trouble herself about me.

I then desired her to let the affair quite alone; and taking up my bundle which I had laid down, hastened towards the door, tho' my tears flowed so fast that I could hardly see my way.—She called me back, bade me sit down, and then asked me what I intended to do.

“I really cannot tell how to act, madam,” said, I, “and you will double my gratitude, by giving me your advice, as well as affording me your protection.”

“I am not able to protect you, child—and as to my advice, I think the best thing you can do, is to go home, and make it up with your mother.”

I told her that my mother and I had not fallen out, as I had been afraid to let her know I had overheard what had past, lest she should have

have carried me to Sir Thomas immediately, out of whose hands I could not have hoped to escape.

"As to that," replied Mrs. Burdet, "if he marries you, you ought not to desire to leave him: and I cannot suppose your mother capable of surrendering you to him upon any other terms: but you do not, perhaps, like a man so many years older than yourself; and, probably, want to run after some other man who is more to your taste."

I assured her that she was mistaken. "However, madam," added I, "tho' my mother has not acted like a parent upon this occasion, she brought me up to abhor lying and deceit, and I will, therefore, freely own that I should not be happy with Sir Thomas for my husband; as freely confess that he never had any design to marry me, and can truly declare that I have no connection, not even an acquaintance with any other man."

My repeated assurances, and my tears together, pleaded strongly for me at last.—Yet Mrs. Burdet over and over declared that she could not tell how to believe what I had said concerning my mother.—You certainly have misinterpreted what you overheard: your antipathy to Sir Thomas made you fancy things which were never intended: your mother could only mean to insist upon your being married to him, and will not surely part with you but upon the most honourable considerations."

I told her, that I was very certain I had not been mistaken with regard to the thousand pounds which Sir Thomas was to pay to my *mother* on her carrying me to him, with the settlement he was to make on *me*.

Mrs.

Mrs. Burdet heard me out, surveyed me attentively, and then said, "And pray, child, what do you purpose to do? I cannot keep you if I was ever so willing to take you into my house: nobody, indeed, has a right to detain a child from her mother while she is under age."

"I should be very ready, madam," replied I, "to return to my mother, could I be sure that she would not desire me to sacrifice myself in the manner I have mentioned, but at the same time I must frankly own, that after what I have seen and heard, I cannot bring myself to go home again—I will go to any other place: I will work for my subsistence."

"What work can such a little delicate thing as *you* do?" answered she.

"I can wait upon a lady: I can paint fans; I can soon learn something in the millinery way."

"To wait upon a lady, or to be a milliner's girl, is to be in an hazardous situation," said she, "and you cannot, I imagine, paint well enough to make your performances turn to account."

I then opened my bundle, and shewed her specimens which I had packed up, as I intended to amuse myself with my pencil, if ever I had an opportunity.

The old gentlewoman looked at them, but seemed to have no relish for them; and in a few moments, answered, "It is not in *my* power to assist you—you must, therefore, go home to your mother."

This reply was like a sentence of death to me; she could not have uttered a more cutting speech to me.—Rising, with my eyes bathed in tears, I fell on my knees, and besought her,
if

if ever she wished to be happy herself, to save me from ruin.—“Let me remain with you, Madam,” added I, “only till I can get a place that will suit me: I shall not be in the least expensive to you—I will work for you: Providence will enable me to repay you in some shape: O do not throw me into the street—only try me—I am sincere—I will be honest—let me live to bless you for your charity.”

My increasing sorrow would not permit me to proceed.—Sobs choked my utterance.

I do not know whether she was melted or not, but she bade me get up, and told me she would consider of what I had delivered.

We sat silent a few moments.—When I had recovered myself a little, she said, “Should I be disposed to try if you have spoken nothing but the truth, how will it be possible for me to conceal you from your mother? or indeed, ought I to attempt the concealment of you? Besides, I cannot afford to keep you, and if you follow any business how is it to be done privately?”

“I will not go by my name,” replied I, “but will live quite retired in your house, and fetch and carry my work of a night: I will wait on you, I will nurse you when you are sick: you shall be my mother, and I will be your child.”

“You are an artful, designing girl,” answered she, with a softened voice: “you shall, however, remain here this evening, and I will think about some employment for you.”

I fell on my knees again to thank her: she then left me alone for above half an hour.

Immediately, on her departure, I offered up my grateful thanks to the Almighty, for having moved Mrs. Burdet’s heart so much in my favour,

favour, and then considered whether I was actually safer under *her* protection than under my mother's: and as my mother had been capable of acting in so mercenary a manner, I thought I had some reason to fear that a woman to whom I was almost a stranger, and who had but a small income, might be tempted to look upon me with lucrative views.—I knew nothing at all of Mrs. Burdet: I had not seen her more than twice at my mother's, and then she staid only a short time; my mother had met her in the street, and brought her home with her.—They mentioned me, I remember, as a fine grown girl, but I was going to school, and did not much mind them. My mother and Mrs. Burdet did not seem to be pleased with each other; yet there was something in the countenance of the latter which I did not dislike: however, I was not interested in any enquiry about her, and therefore no enquiry did I make.—While I was trying to recollect any more circumstances relating to her, she returned to me, and bade me follow her up stairs into a room which joined to her bed-chamber. In that room I might, she told me, put my bundle.

Soon afterwards we went to dinner, and entered into chat. I found her an agreeable companion. She had a very small house, with only a tight girl by way of servant, and let out her first floor to a widow lady, who kept also one maid—The lady was, at that time, out of town.

We talked little of *my* affairs the rest of the day: at night she informed me that I was to sleep with Patty her servant.

As soon as breakfast was over, she went out, and returned in about an hour.

During

During her absence, I took up an apron which she had left upon her drawers and which wanted, I perceived, mending, and began to darn it, in order to shew her how willing I was to make all the amends in my power for her kindness to me.

When she came she said, "I have been with your mother, Fanny—"

I started, concluding that she had been to her purposely to tell her where I was, and that I was lost for ever.—My work dropped from my hands? I turned as pale as death,—and cried out, "I am undone."

"Not yet," answered she, with a half smile—"you are a grateful girl I see, and I believe, an honest one.—I went to your mother: she was gone out, the maid told me, in search of you—and by what I could worm out of her, I find that you have not deceived me; but we must now think of some method to conceal you, and to enable you at the same time, to get your living. Your name shall be Osgood: I will, this afternoon, carry your painting to a printseller of my acquaintance, who will, I hope, find business for you, only you must be content to keep close for the present, and I will manage your affairs till your mother and Sir Thomas have ceased to make a search after you."

This proposal pleased me exceedingly. I was so charmed with it that I leaped up, and threw my arms round Mrs. Burdet's neck, calling her my dearest friend, my generous preserver.

She appeared to be satisfied with my gratitude—"Continue to be good," said she, "and all will, I dare pronounce, do well."

In

In a few days I had as many prints to colour as I could do; but Mrs. Burdet and the print-seller—whom I had not yet seen—settled things between themselves in such a manner, that the profits arising from my labours were inconsiderable.—However, I made no complaints, but worked hard, and cheerfully, not once venturing to leave the house, lest I should be seen by somebody who might acquaint either my mother or Sir Thomas with the place of my residence.

One morning Mrs. Burdet came, hurrying into the little room, in which I sat at work, and asked me for the coloured drawing which she had shewn to the printseller; and which had induced him to employ me, and which had been returned to me as it was unfinished.

I gave it her.

The next day she told me that a gentleman would come and talk with me concerning it. He, accordingly, came—He was a polite, elderly man, with a nosegay of fine fresh flowers in his hand. He asked me if I thought I could draw them, and paint them in their natural colours.

I told him I would try.

He then gave them to me. I placed them in the most picturesque manner I could, in a bottle of water.—In two or three days he called again, and finding them exactly drawn, and coloured, and in a manner too, which pleased him—"You have discovered both genius and taste," said he, "and I must desire to have a little private conversation with you."

Mrs. Burdet then quitted the room, but I saw plainly by her looks, that she quitted it with no great satisfaction.

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As soon as she was gone Mr Hyam told me, that as I was very able to draw and colour flowers and plants from nature, he would gladly employ me ; adding, that he should be glad to know my terms.

“ I am totally ignorant, Sir,” replied I, “ of the value of pieces of this kind, and will therefore leave it to you to determine the worth of them.”

He then asked me what I received for colouring prints, and I freely acquainted him with the trifling sums which had been paid to me for my performances.

He looked earnestly at me, and shrugged his shoulders—“ Is the gentlewoman who left us just now your mother ?” said he.

I coloured at the question, and answered in the negative.

“ What right then has she to so large a share of your profits ?”

“ She is a friend,” replied I, “ to whom I am very much obliged, and I should be glad to have it in my power to gain enough to make suitable returns for the favours which I have received from her.”—“ And I,” said he, “ shall chuse to pay you, myself, that you may be enabled to shew your generosity.”—Putting five guineas into my hand, he added, “ You shall have the same sum for the plant which you will receive from me to-morrow, and I will mention you to several of my friends in an advantageous manner, who may, perhaps, employ you when I have nothing for you to do. Such a genius, and such industry ought to be encouraged.” I not only thanked Mr. Hyam with the most grateful expressions I could articulate, but my eyes overflowed with gratitude, and as I thought that my little labours had
been

been over-rated, I offered to return the money to him — “Stay, Sir,” said I, “this is too much for a first attempt, when I do better I shall deserve it.”

At that instant Mrs. Burdet rushed into the room, and laying hold of my arm, cried, “What is the foolish girl about? why, are you such a ridiculous simpleton, Fanny, as to give back money? It is very plain that you are not fit to be your own cash-keeper. But I hope, Sir,” continued she, addressing herself, with a softened voice, to Mr. Hyam, “I hope you will not suffer her to make such ducks and drakes of her money: how is she to live pray, and who must pay for her board and lodging? She ought to consider me, if she takes no thought for herself.” Then, turning, to me, “Pretty doings,” continued she, “to refuse five guineas! why, you must, certainly, be distracted.”

The latter part of the above speech, delivered in an outrageous manner, not a little disconcerted me: I felt my face glow with shame, and could gladly have crept into any corner to hide myself, lest Mr. Hyam should imagine that I, in any shape, accorded with such a mercenary, such a violent woman: yet though I detested the meanness of her principles, I was under too many obligations to her to oppose her strongly. I therefore cast down my eyes, and was silent.

“Don’t be alarmed, Mrs. Burdet,” said Mr. Hyam, in whose benevolent countenance I had, at first, read compassion for *me*, and contempt for *her*; “I am not going to avail myself of this young lady’s noble behaviour in a censurable manner. She who has but little, and who industriously employs her
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excellent talents to make the least addition to it, merits the greatest encouragement and generosity from those who are blest with taste to admire, and with money to purchase her labours." — Then, turning to me, he added, "My servant, Miss Osgood, shall attend you to-morrow with the plant I have mentioned, and I dare say the drawing taken by you from it, will give me the highest satisfaction."

I made him a low curtsy—I could not speak, the respectful politeness with which he behaved to me filled me with the most pleasing sensations, but when he was gone, and when I saw Mrs. Burdet swelling with rage, I sighed to think into what hands I had fallen: a moment's consideration, however, as she had taken me in when nobody else would have, perhaps, received me, brought me to a resolution to live upon the best terms possible with her—That resolution was strengthened by gratitude.

Her first words, after Mr. Hyam's departure, were, "And so now you have feathered your nest, you think to set up for yourself, and leave me to get my money where I can for your board and lodging: but let me tell you, girl, for you are neither more nor less, for all he *Missed* you up and *young Ladied* you so; let me tell you, I say, that I will take care to pay myself, or you shall turn out into the street, or what you like still worse, go back to your mother: *she* shall know where and who you are; I won't harbour a pert, handsome young hussy, to fly in my face every moment: no, no, you shall go back again to her whom you call mother.

"Would

"Would I could not call her mother," whispered I to myself. "Had I had another parent, I should not have been in this situation."—Such was my little soliloquy, but as I was so unfortunately situated, I thought it was more prudent to accommodate myself to my condition: I endeavoured, therefore, to sooth Mrs. Burdet, by telling her, that I had only refused so large a sum, because I looked upon it as too considerable for my drawing; adding, that as Mr. Hyam had so genteely obliged me to receive it, *she* should have half of it; assuring her, at the same time, that the moiety of all my profits should be at her service.

She held out her hand eagerly for the offered share of Mr. Hyam's five guineas, and I plainly saw, by the avidity with which she seized it, that she would gladly have grasped the whole.—That mean-spirited mode of proceeding gave me a very different opinion of her, and I began to think myself not much, if at all, safer with her than with my mother.—However, I flattered myself that I should find a valuable friend in Mr. Hyam, hoping that he would not only employ me, on his own account, agreeably to his promise, but protect me from this woman's insolence, if his protection should be necessary. In consequence of my flattering hopes, I strove to coax Mrs. Burdet into a good humour, that evening.

The next day I began my new drawing, and was successful beyond my expectations. Before it was finished, Mr. Hyam came to look at it. He bestowed the most animating encomiums, on my execution, and asked my leave to bring a friend the following morning, to see it. You

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may be sure that I cheerfully assented to a request made with true politeness.

On the appointed morning he entered my apartment, accompanied by a young man of fashion, whose first appearance prejudiced me in favour of his understanding. He was tall, finely made, and had a dignity in his air and address which immediately discovered him to be a man of sense, elegantly educated. The turn of his countenance was serious; manliness and solidity were conspicuous in it. When he smiled there was a becoming pleasantry about his mouth, which was of no small advantage to his face; his forehead was high, and his hair grew thick, and graceful, and his eyes seemed to pierce into your very soul.

"This is the young lady, my Lord," said Mr. Hyam, presenting me to him, while I rose to receive him, "with whose masterly performances I am so much pleased."

My Lord offered his hand to receive the drawing which I held out to him, but at the same time rivetted his eyes so intensely on my face, that he almost disconcerted me. He seemed to be both sensible of the embarrassment he had occasioned, and sorry for it, by throwing his eyes, hastily upon the vellum.

He looked earnestly at the drawing for some time, without speaking.—While he was so engaged, Mr. Hyam leaned on his shoulder, and cried, "Well my Lord, have I deceived you? is it not worth your attention?"

"It is, indeed inimitable," replied his Lordship: "how exactly has the pencil copied nature! yet what pencil," continued he, "can do justice to that fine face?—I beg pardon, Madam—(seeing me blush) but I came here to admire."

I got courage enough, at last, to reply that my Lord and Mr. Hyam, both, did me a great deal of honour, and sat down to my work.

They staid a good while, and entered into conversation with me upon several subjects.

My Lord asked me of whom I had learnt.—I named my first master, tho' indeed, I was principally indebted to Mr. Seymount, for the little taste I had to boast of. I did not, however, mention *him*.

"But what master," said my Lord, "could teach you, Miss Osgood, without being inspired with the tenderest of all passions, while you was listening to his lessons?"

I was not willing to put a stop to a conversation which gave me pleasure, by taking every compliment paid to me *seriously*, and therefore endeavoured, in the best manner I could, to appear unaffected by them.

Mr. Hyam observing my apparent indifference, cried, "You are in the right, Miss Osgood not to mind what these young fellows say: they cannot, possibly, I believe, speak to women, upon the commonest subjects, without gallantry."

"Why are we young fellows," replied my Lord, with a smile, "the only gallant people? Do not *you*, Hyam, sometimes say fine things to fine women? Ay, you do, but with not half the meaning with which I have just spoken."

I don't know what *your* meaning is my Lord," answered Mr. Hyam, rather furlily I thought, "but this I know, you cannot, ought not, to speak with any meaning *here*."

The emphasis laid on the word *here*," made me colour, tho' I was not sure I was any way concerned in the speech which had occasioned it. My colour was not rendered fainter by my Lord's

Lord's behaviour, who fixed his eyes on my face with a kind of anxiety which surprized, and which also touched me.

"Why am I so much affected by his Lordship's carriage?"—said I to myself.

My Lord was silent during the remainder of the time he staid. I seemed to be busy with my pencil—Mr. Hyam looked at us both, alternately, and then, taking my Lord by the arm, said, "Come, we do but hinder her."

"I beg pardon," replied my Lord, with a half sigh—adding, with a respectful earnestness, "I hope, Miss Osgood, I have not been an intruder to day: I hope you will, now and then, permit me to make myself happy by calling upon you."

A smile, accompanied with a motion of my head, while I sat, was the only answer I made; and I proceeded towards the finishing of my drawing with more alacrity than ever. Lord Woodford's compliments—tho' I was not so weak as to reckon upon them—were extremely pleasing, and doubly pleasing, because I fancied, from the natural seriousness of his aspect, that he had not been accustomed to make them to every body.—Mr. Seymount's attachment to me had engaged my attention; as it flattered my vanity, it also awakened my gratitude. I imagined that the man who could bring himself to appear in a degrading light for my sake, must be seriously and violently in love with me: I could not, therefore, help feeling sensations in his favour; especially when I thought my mother too severe, indeed rather rude to him: I wished to soften her harshness into a grateful kind of civility for his having distinguished me: and if she *had* behaved in a proper manner to him, time might have ripened, his

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friendship into love.—Something like esteem I certainly began to feel for *him*, after having interested in his safety from humanity. But different emotions were excited in me by Lord Woodford, when he made his first visit; there was a solidity and an air of sincerity in his behaviour which convinced me that he had not been used to lavish his compliments upon every pretty girl he met with: his compliments, therefore, to me were particularly agreeable. — There was also a taste in his expressions, if I may say so, which heightened the value of them. Seymount appeared to be a young fellow, romantically struck with a pretty face which he had never seen before, which face he desired to see again, as much out of curiosity as admiration—Lord Woodford, on the other hand, rather seemed to wish that he had not been pleased at the sight of me, and while he paid me the compliment of desiring leave to visit me again, looked as if his heart had no share in it.

Mr. Hyam came twice, afterwards, without him; he did not even mention him, and it would have been improper in *me*, you know, to have enquired about him.

Mr Hyam took home his drawing, after having paid me six guineas, and ordered another.

As this way of getting a little money was pleasant as well as profitable, I was quite satisfied with it, and to make Mrs. Burdet equally so, I gave her half my gains; but she was one of those women who are troubled with an inquisitive disposition, she was, therefore, but *half* contented with her share of my profits; the strong desire which she had to know who Lord Woodford was, made her very restless.—

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I was full as ignorant about him as she herself was, being only acquainted with his title, and, consequently, had it not in my power to gratify her curiosity.

In about a week afterwards, Lord Woodford made his second appearance, and alone. A charming smile overspread his fine face as he approached. I am pretty sure I smiled in return, for I felt a pleasure at the sight of him, which I can neither define nor describe. A blush also accompanied my smile, as my Lord, instantly re-assuming his usual seriousness of aspect, drew back a little, and said, "Have I taken an unseasonable hour to wait on you, Miss Osgood?"

"Not at all my Lord," replied I, with a readiness at which I was, myself, surprised, and offered him a chair.

He sat down, after having articulated a compliment which politeness made rather necessary, and it was delivered with inimitable grace.

We were then both silent for some time: the silence, on *my* side was, I must own, awkward, and painful; I, therefore, rose, and fetched my last drawing, about which Mr. Hyam had employed me, and asked his Lordship's opinion of it, intreating him at the same time, to do me the favour to correct any fault he might discover in it.

"It is charming," said he, looking first at me, and then at the drawing; "there is not a single fault discoverable; but I could wish—"

"For what, my Lord," cried I, eagerly interrupting him; "there is certainly some defect in it. You are so obliging as to be sorry to point out my mistakes, but you may be of infinite service to me by the detection of them.

—I very much wish to be improved by your Lordship's judgment."

My Lord looked at me, attentively, while I spoke: then suddenly turned from me for a moment.

Imagining that I had been guilty of a capital error, I felt a dejection not to be expressed, but it forced me to repeat my request.

Returning the drawing to me, he said, "There is no fault in it: you have been only censurable," added he, surveying me with exquisite anxiety, "for drawing at all."

The anxiety strongly marked in his Lordship's countenance, increased mine.

"How, my Lord," cried I, frightened, and abashed, "Have I improperly employed myself in drawing those plants?"

"Certainly no," replied he, earnestly: "nobody, I will affirm, nobody can execute them in a more elegant, in a more masterly manner; but yet I wish you was not obliged to do any."

I could not comprehend his Lordship's meaning: I was surprized at such a speech; it hurt me: I felt very uneasy on having one part of my conduct disapproved of by so amiable a man; by a man whom I beheld with the eyes of partiality. I, therefore, with a serious, a solemn face indeed, hastened to exculpate myself from any impropriety, by telling his lordship, "that as I was necessitated to follow some employment to procure a subsistence, I thought drawing, having been often flattered for the execution of my performances by people of taste, as eligible as any other business." My Lord gazed at me, with a tenderness in his eyes, sighed, and exclaimed, "Cruel necessity!—But how happened it—Pardon me, Miss Of-
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good—how happened it that you, with such extraordinary talents, should be compelled to take this method to subsist yourself?—Believe me, madam, it pains me to be so inquisitive, yet it pains me still more to remain incapable of serving you through ignorance.”

He looked at that moment, as if he really suffered from having wounded my delicacy by his curiosity; and the refinement of his behaviour having raised him higher in my esteem than he was before, I could not help feeling a desire to give him the information he seemed to wish for so ardently; not in the least considering whether I should act discreetly or imprudently by opening my heart freely to a man of whom I knew so little; but a sudden and irresistible impulse prompted me to acquaint him with my situation.—I related all that had passed concerning Sir Thomas, and waited with much impatience to hear his sentiments about my intelligence.

Several times he viewed me with the greatest attention, and when I ceased to speak, his eyes were so rivetted on me, with tenderness and admiration in them, that I was, I confess, more pleased than disconcerted; tho’ I felt some confusion as well as pleasure.

For a few moments he sat silent, then lifting up his hands and eyes, “Good God!” said he eagerly, “to what dangers has not, that charming innocence, that delightful simplicity been exposed! but, dear, amiable Fanny,” continued he, “what difficulties may you not, still have to encounter? you will, doubtless, by your good sense, and by your virtue, be able to surmount them; your discretion, which has hitherto saved you from the snares spread against you, will not, I trust, forsake you up-

on any future emergency : but your present situation is extremely hazardous : you are not, in my opinion, secure from danger a single moment."

"No my Lord?" replied I, excessively alarmed; "am I dangerously situated here?—You think, then, that either Sir Thomas, or my mother has found me out."

"I am quite ignorant with regard to them both," answered he, with more anxiety in his countenance than had yet appeared in it, but where is the man who will suffer such a person, and such a mind, to be buried in obscurity? they ought not indeed to be so buried.—Good Heavens! why is there not—however I will protect you from every insult: I will be your sincere, your permanent friend: you have behaved with so charming a frankness, and have discovered so excellent a heart, that I am determined to give you all the assistance in my power, and in a manner too at which you shall not be offended.—I cannot any longer permit myself to see you thus labouring for a subsistence, a wretched subsistence at best: I cannot see you live exposed to the sight, to the insolent carriage of every idle coxcomb: if you remain here you may be dragged away by the woman whom you call your mother—how unworthy of that appellation!—and forced into the arms of that detestable old fellow.—My blood freezes at the thought."

In this energetic strain, did he deliver himself, and indeed the latter part of his speech made my blood run cold.—But while I shuddered at the danger to which I was exposed, and which he had represented in lively colours, I received an inexpressible satisfaction on seeing him so much affected by my unfortunate condition :

dition: *that* satisfaction was, no doubt, strongly visible in my eyes, into which tears soon rushed, and I replied in melancholy accents, "What must I do then, my Lord?"

"Will you consent to be advised by me?" said he, eagerly.

Before I could answer he proceeded—"Will you consent to let me remove you from this woman, who is, unquestionably, forming some design against you?—Will you not trust yourself with *me*, Fanny?" added he, in a softened, in the most persuasive tone.

I blushed, I looked down: unexperienced as I was, I felt the impropriety of this request, and I—sighed.

"You sigh—you are silent," replied he pressing my hand; "do you distrust me? do you think me capable of injuring you, Miss Osgood?"

I don't know, my Lord," answered I, after some hesitation, withdrawing my hand; "I would, willingly, continue to have a good opinion of your Lordship, and, therefore, I believe, I had better not trust you; I should be sorry to be deceived."

"How flattering is that dreaded sorrow!—how amiable your fears!—yet banish them, Fanny; not my own honour shall be dearer to me than yours; but you must remain here no longer without a friend, without a protector. Sir Thomas, or your mother, or a thousand other people may involve you in numberless difficulties, and destroy your peace."

"And to what other place can I go?" said I—"I know nobody: I have, hitherto, met with no interruption here, and I may, by leaving this house, fall into worse hands."

"I will take care of that," replied he; I will secure you a retreat; I will furnish you with every thing to render it agreeable to you.—You shall be your own mistress, Fanny, you shall depend upon nobody's pleasure but your own: I will be the most submissive of your friends."

I could not help smiling to think of the satisfaction which he promised himself from his last words.—I shook my head, however, at his fine scheme—I thought it, indeed, a very pleasing one, yet I, at the same time, deemed it to be an impracticable one; because I knew that I had not money to live in the manner he mentioned; and I told him, between jest and earnest, "that when I had saved enough by my drawing, I should like an independent life extremely well."

"Talk no more of drawing", answered he; "it must not be; you may amuse yourself with your pencil in your little retreat, at your leisure hours, but on no account must you make your performances publick; they are too exquisitely finished to be exhibited to every common eye."

There is no saying how long his Lordship would have expatiated upon a subject in which he seemed to be very much interested, if Mr. Hyam had not, by his entrance, put a stop to a conversation which began to embarrass me. Tho' I knew not a great deal of the world, I was not quite so ignorant as to suppose that Lord Woodford, or any other Lord would support me for nothing: I was, however, inexperienced enough not to be shocked at his Lordship's offer: I neither started like a prude, nor put on the serious, considerate countenance of a discreet woman, the propriety of whose

whose behaviour had never been disputed.—I listened to him with cheerfulness ; with smiles. In short, I was astonished to find a man of my Lord's' charming understanding and person, taste and sensibility, interested about such a poor, little, insignificant girl as myself.—Yet, flattered as I was by the attentions of such a man, I resolved not to close with his generous proposal ; I should have corrected myself for the pleasure which I received from it, but my heart was touched by it.

The interruption occasioned by Mr. Hyam to our *tête-a-tête*, was very seasonable for me : my Lord was, visibly, displeased with it, and soon afterwards, took his leave.

When he was gone, Mr. Hyam said, “ he fancied my Lord had been making love to me.”

“ No, indeed, my good Sir,” answered I, blushing ; “ wonder why you think so.”

“ Because he is a man of taste,” replied he “ and because you have beauty : you see mine is a very natural conclusion ; but take care, and do not be too ready to listen to him ; continue to be a good girl, and mind your business ; by and by you may meet with a proper man to give your heart to.”

This reply heightened the colour in my cheeks, and increased the agitation which I felt on the mention of my Lord.

When Mr. Hyam left me to my own reflections, his Lordship's late behaviour too much engaged my thoughts.—While I sat considering what steps to take to prevent them from dwelling upon one object—and *such* an object—Mrs. Burdet came into my room.

Immediately, upon her entrance, she began to ask me a great many impertinent questions, both

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both about me, and concerning my Lord.—She was also exceedingly inquisitive about my future plan of life. My answers to her questions were short and evasive—I really had not absolutely determined what to do, and after what I had observed in her carriage, I had no inducement to communicate my designs to her.

She looked at me with a penetrating, and with a malignant eye, at least I fancied so; but Mr. Hyam's civilities, and particularly Lord Woodford's most friendly offers—tho' I had resolved not to accept of them—made me sufficiently easy, and I returned to my pencil without troubling myself about her.

The next day, and the two following days, Lord Woodford came and sat by me while I finished the drawing, admiring it extremely, but persuading me to draw, for the future, only for amusement. He talked to me in raptures of the little retreat which he had found out for me. I changed the conversation several times—My Lord was perhaps sorry to be turned from his favourite topic, but I lost nothing by endeavouring to introduce new subjects, for he conversed upon every subject in a manner entertaining beyond expression. So delighted was I with his conversible powers, that my heart bounded with joy at his approach, and sunk within me at his departure. Charmed with the melody of his tongue, I listened to it without regarding Mr. Hyam's admonitions: I did not give myself the trouble to consider how indiscreet my conduct might be, I almost forgot every thing but the transporting satisfaction resulting from his dear society.

On the evening of the fourth day, after the striking proof I had received of Mrs. Burdet's inquisi-

inquisitive disposition, while I was sitting alone, ruminating on what had happened to me, the maid came, hurrying to me, and cried, "Oh Miss, my mistress has had a sad fall in crossing the next street, and has been carried into Mr. Ball's:—She has sent for me, and begs you would just step along with me, and see her

As I had often heard them talk of Ball the baker, I, naturally, supposed that the girl's intelligence was true, tho' I remember I made an objection with regard to leaving the house: however, being pressed to go, I threw my cloak over my shoulders, and followed her: It was almost dark.

Just as I had got about half the length of the street, which was a private one, a man, overtaking me, seized my hand and cried, "This way, this way;" and, before I could recover my hand I found myself surrounded, lifted up, and put into a coach—The windows of it were instantly drawn up by a person within, who held me fast in spite of all my screaming, and struggling to get loose.

The coach drove very briskly, and as there was no light, I could not possibly see by whom I was kept down on my seat. I concluded, indeed, that Sir Thomas, or somebody employed by him, was the person, and was exceedingly terrified. I also imagined, and trembled at the thought, that I should be carried out of town, and so closely confined as to have no hopes of escaping from my prison. I therefore, redoubled my cries, in order to induce somebody passing by, touched with compassion, as well as prompted by curiosity, to stop the coach, before it was out of London, imagining that there would be fewer passengers upon any of the roads about it, and that I should, consequently,

quently, stand the less chance to make any creature come to my assistance.

The louder I cried, the more pains did those who guarded me take to stop my mouth. At last, my strength became so much exhausted that I had hardly power to speak. As soon as I found that the coach was off the pavement, I looked upon myself as devoted to destruction.—I sat almost motionless: only, now and then, pouring forth a prayer from my distressed heart, to the Almighty, for his protection.

While I was thus situated, a great noise, occasioned by the trampling of horses, and the rolling of a carriage, tempted me to try once more the utmost efforts of my voice. I screamed: I shrieked.

At that instant our coach was stopped; the door was forced open, and I beheld, by the blaze of the flambeaux, Lord Woodford, attended by several servants. He held out his arms; I screamed for joy, and threw myself into them, scarce able to breathe, and agitated with a thousand conflicting emotions. He conveyed me, he rather flew with me to his post-chaise and four, which was the carriage I had heard, seated me in it, and placed himself by my side:—After having spoken a few words to his people, he drew up the glass, and we set off full gallop. He then turned to me, whom he still supported, for I was so overpowered with terror, surprize and joy, that I was quite incapable of speaking, and in the tenderest accents, asked me, “how I felt myself.”—He told me, in the same accents, “that he hoped I had been only frightened by the infamous treatment I had met with, and begged me to make myself perfectly easy; assuring me that no other harm should distress me, and that I might

might depend upon his doing every thing in the most respectful manner, on *his* part, to make my life agreeable to me."

I first endeavoured to thank him with a deep sigh, while he affectionately pressed my hands in his, and asked me if the should stop to give me an opportunity to take some refreshment. "I am very much afraid," added he, with the kindest looks, "that you are ill."

I answered, "By no means—I have only been excessively terrified: but I return my sincerest thanks to Heaven for having sent me a deliverer, on whose honour I may rely."

"You may, indeed, rely on it" answered he; "I will sooner perish than injure you—Place some confidence in me, Miss Osgood; you will not find yourself deceived."

I thanked him, and became more and more satisfied with my situation. The truth is, I loved Lord Woodford to a degree not to be described; I was very sensible, however, that I could not have been in *that* situation with him, with any discretion, if the extraordinary and unforeseen event, above-mentioned, had not thrown me into it. As I was *so* situated, I could not help indulging the sensations I felt in his Lordship's company—His extreme solicitude on my account, his tender enquiries after my health, and every gentle pressure of his hand, gave my young heart, naturally full of sensibility, and now warmed with gratitude, transports inconceivable. It was my duty, I thought, to appear grateful, but I also imagined I could not, discreetly, let my lover see my feelings in his favour. Yet I was a poor dissembler. I was always an enemy to deceit. I should have gloried in avowing *those* feelings for my Lord, if our stations in life had not been

been so widely different : when I reflected upon *that* difference, I believed it absolutely necessary to conceal my affection for him.—I will frankly own, however, that by endeavouring to behave with the strictest prudence upon the occasion, I did no small violence to my inclination.

Lord Woodford plainly perceived the struggles I endured between love and modesty : he seemed to be highly pleased with them, and his increasing attentions were the most flattering ones in the world.

As soon as I had a little recovered my spirits, I entreated him to tell me how he came to know that I was in any danger.

“I could not,” replied he, “think of going to an appointment I had this evening, till I had first called on you, so strong was my desire to see you, a desire which I could not, possibly, conquer. Accordingly, I ordered my chariot to stop at Mrs. Burdet’s door. Immediately on my arrival I saw the maid in a great fright, and she informed me that somebody had carried you away in a coach.—As soon as the girl had given me the the best directions in her power with regard to the *route* which the coach took, I ordered my coachman to follow it as fast as possible, and dispatched one of my fellows home to send a post-chaise and four after me with the utmost expedition. The moment we were off the stones I stepped into my chaise, and by so doing, fortunately overtook the carriage into which you had been forced, time enough to be serviceable to you. As no resistance was made, I fancied that the people with you were not apprehensive of any friend’s coming to your assistance.”

“And

"And whither are we now going, my Lord?" said I, after having thanked him for flying to my rescue.

"To a small house, a few miles out of town," replied he, "of which I have long wished to see you mistress, and in which you will, I hope, meet with every thing agreeable to you. You will find servants, and a carriage entirely at your command; and you will receive, every quarter, a sum sufficient to support the appearance to which you are, by your uncommon merit, fairly entitled."

"I have a thousand thanks to return to you, my Lord," said I, blushing, and looking down, "a thousand thanks for this most generous behaviour: but you overwhelm me with your liberality: I cannot ever hope to make suitable acknowledgements."

"Shall I not be favoured with your friendship?" said he, eagerly "and your esteem—if you think me worthy of it? and shall I not then be overpaid?"

"But women of character, my Lord, are not, usually supported in this manner by gentlemen: and if, by this step, I lose my reputation, I shall be unworthy—however conscious I may be of my own innocence—of your future protection."

"Unworthy?—Impossible! you cannot be unworthy."

"I may not, perhaps, in *your* opinion, be undeserving," replied I, "because you are the most generous of men; but if the world thinks ill of me, I shall not reckon myself worthy of your esteem: a woman who is in the least suspected, cannot be a spotless character, and such a character alone can merit your Lordship's regard."

"As

"As to absolute perfection, a perfect man and a perfect woman, would be unnatural beings, and consequently disagreeable ones."

"No, surely, my Lord; the less imperfect we are, the more agreeable I imagine, we shall be."

"I shall get nothing, I see," said he, with an enchanting smile, "by disputing with you upon this subject; suffer me, however, my dear Fanny, to tell you that as we have, most of us, a partiality for ourselves, we do not readily take to those whose merit is superior to our own; we are more inclined to love those who have a few amiable weaknesses, which calling for our compassion, naturally excite our tenderness and affection."

"What you say, my Lord," answered I eagerly, "may, possibly, be true: but the weaknesses of our fellow-creatures cannot raise our esteem for them: it is, undoubtedly, pleasing to be loved for our behaviour, but it is more laudable, I think, to act in such a manner as to be esteemed."

"What a charming, what a just distinction! Yet give me leave to say, that I have not so much ambition to be esteemed, as to be loved by the mistress of my heart."

I repeated my former reply.

My Lord looked serious.—"You know not," said he, with a sigh, "what it is to be inspired with the most delightful of all passions."

The conversation was now, I thought, growing too particular, I, therefore, turned it, "by asking him, how long it would be before we stopped."

"This moment, if you please," said my Lord—"Every wish of your heart, if you will but disclose it, and if you are silent, I will endeavour

endeavour to read it in your lovely eyes, shall be complied with, instantly complied with."

I thanked him, more with blushes, than with words, "I only asked out of an idle curiosity," added I; "let me desire your Lordship not to retard the journey a minute on *my* account."

We arrived, at length, at a pretty little house, *embosomed*—I may say, in a grove of trees.

My Lord conducted me into it, and presented a couple of female servants to me, and a lad also in a genteel livery: he ordered them all to look on me as their mistress.

"I will sup with you to night, Miss Osgood," said my Lord, speaking aloud, "if you will permit me to give myself that pleasure, and then retire to my own house, which is about half a mile distant from hence."

I assented: how could I do otherwise?

As soon as we were seated in the parlour, he told me that he had formed a plan which would secure my character from calumny, and make every thing easy; adding, that he hoped it would meet with *my* approbation.

"You cannot, you are sensible, Miss Osgood," continued he, "return to your mother, after the injurious treatment which you have received from her, and you have no other relation: only condescend to chuse *me* for your guardian: I have a legal right to protect you: all enquiries into your fortune, and affairs, will be to no purpose, when I am trusted with every thing relating to you.—The moment my dear Fanny—(seeing me look serious) the very moment I abuse the confidence you place in me, cast me from you for ever.—You will then be as much at liberty to act agreeable

agreeable to your inclination as you are now: but I flatter myself that you cannot chuse a man more sincerely devoted to your service than I am."

I blushed, and bowed my grateful acknowledgments. I was not so ignorant of the world, as not to see that my Lord, under the specious title of a guardian, might take great liberties with me, but I thought he had found out a genteel way (the only decent one indeed which he could have proposed) to provide for me without injuring my reputation: and, situated as I then was, it was incumbent on me, I fancied, to view things in the most favourable light; to say nothing of the strong propensity I felt to like whatever my Lord said or did.

When he had explained himself so far, he asked me, "if it would not be agreeable to me to walk up stairs, and see the apartments he had ventured to chuse for me."

I smiled approbation. He then rang the bell, and bade Nanny, the upper maid servant, attend me. She conducted me into a very pleasant bed-chamber, and dressing-room, elegantly furnished with chintz, and decorated with pictures, glasses, cabinets, and china: the rest of the house, though a small one, was ornamented in the same pleasing manner, taste having been consulted rather than magnificence.

When I returned to the parlour, my Lord made a number of apologies because the commodious and cabinets were not yet filled with the necessary appendixes to the toilet: "But I could not tell when I should be able to prevail on you to settle here," added he, "and I imagined that you would be more pleased to regulate

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regulate every thing about your dress yourself. You have, therefore, Miss Osgood—presenting a hundred pound bank note to me—nothing to do but to send your orders to the principal ware-houses in London, from which you may be immediately accommodated.”

I felt my face glow like crimson: I would have returned the note, but my Lord instantly refused taking it “My dear Fanny,” said he; “you must only look upon this as a part of your fortune.”

Oppressed with favours thus, unable to reject them when offered in so charming a manner, still readier to oblige than to be obliged, and yet dreading, worse than death, the sacrifice of her virtue, even to the man on whom she doated—imagine you see a poor defenceless girl left quite alone, with nothing but the natural goodness of her heart, a heart uncorrupted by vice, yet full of sensibility, to enable her to behave with a proper regard to her character in a very trying situation.

My Lord perceived my embarrassment: he felt for my confusion, and with a delicacy peculiar to himself, with a vivacity which rendered him irresistible, immediately turned the conversation upon the most entertaining subjects.

Taking out his watch, on a sudden he started up, and asked me, “If I would give him leave to assist me in doing the honours of my table.”

I replied with a smile, “that he would give me particular pleasure by so doing.”

He then flew to the bell, when Tom—the lad abovementioned, came in—he said to him—“Miss Osgood would have supper.”

In

In ten minutes, being told it was upon table, he led me into the other parlour, seated me at the head of the table, and begged me to help him, as he was extremely hungry.

I felt, at first, a little awkward in the new part I was to act; but with so elegant, and so charming an instructor, I soon caught all the superficial forms of good breeding.

My Lord had a remarkable ease in his carriage, and trifled in the most agreeable manner in the world: yet was he still more enchanting when he conversed seriously upon useful, as well as amusing topics: to every topic his voice, his looks, his behaviour, were all happily suited, and it was impossible not to listen to him with the strictest attention, whenever he opened his lips. There was, at the same time, so much modesty in his air, and so much humility in his features, that not the smallest streak of vanity was discoverable in them.

With such a man, my dear Maria, *insensibility* herself would have been transported.—What woman could have resisted such a man? Lord Woodford was very soon, indeed, in possession of my heart; I only wished that it had been more worthy of his acceptance.

We lived very rationally together, and the time flew away with delightful rapidity. My Lord slept at his own house, but generally spent the whole day—always the greatest part of it—with *me*.—He, commonly, came to breakfast; sometimes a couple of hours afterwards. When the weather was favourable, we walked in a beautiful shrubbery, on the other side of a fine lawn, which fronted my elegant little mansion. Hither, my Lord, observing my taste for flowers and gardening, sent all kinds
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of curious plants, and took an infinite deal of pleasure in seeing me range them agreeable to their several colours.

At other times, my drawing and my needle engaged my attention, and while I was employed, my Lord either read or chatted to me.—I had learnt musick, but not of one of the best masters: and as my taste for drawing had always been predominant, I had not attended to my lessons sufficiently to make any great progress.

My Lord, sitting by me, one day while I was at work, said, “As your voice is extremely sweet, Fanny, you must, I imagine, sing well, I never heard you, but I will venture to say that I should be charmed with your vocal performances.”

“I have not applied to musick, my Lord, so closely as I should have done,” answered I, “but I will practise, if I shall give you the least pleasure by so doing.”

He thanked me in a manner excessively polite, as if I had conferred the greatest favour on him, and immediately, sent to his house for a harpsichord, telling me, at the same time, that he was extravagantly fond of musick, and that he would send for an organ if I liked the instrument.

This was too considerable a temptation to be resisted, though I felt sufficient satisfaction by accommodating myself to *his* taste.—Accordingly, he went to London on purpose to chuse an organ for me, and he very soon taught me to touch it in a masterly way. Few people played with more judgment than himself: and sometimes he accompanied me with his violencello, with such bewitching tones, that he made me eager to exert all my powers.—Yet he would
never

never sit long, intently, to any of my employments: he contrived to vary them for me, and seemed very studious to prevent my wishing for any other companion.—Blessed with *his* conversation, I should indeed, have discovered the most deplorable want of taste, if I had sighed for the company of any other man—I was thoroughly contented with his society.

Sometimes, also, I rode out with him in his chaise. Whenever we came to a spot particularly pleasant, we quitted the chaise, and walked. Now and then we dined, and drank tea at his house; and strolled in the park and gardens—In the evening he brought me home.—In all this continued intimacy never did I hear Lord Woodford utter a syllable which was unfit for my ears; never did he take any unbecoming liberties.—He behaved only as an affectionate brother would have behaved to a sister, for whom he had the sincerest regard.—He often took hold of my hand, indeed, and often, while we were walking together, put my arm under his: yet with all his *retenue*, with all his respectful silence, his eyes spoke the tenderest language, and he was, apparently, the most impassioned lover, as well as the truest, and most disinterested friend.—I was, myself, no less tender, but I was upon my guard: yet as my mind opened, and as I acquired new ideas from the books recommended to my perusal, and from the improving conversations occasioned by them, I became unhappy.

I have already told you, my dear Maria, that I loved Lord Woodford extremely. I very soon found that a separation from him would be a blow too heavy for me to bear. The apprehension of such a blow tormented me day and

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and night: In vain did I endeavour to administer consolation to myself by the tenderness of my Lord's behaviour, which left me no room to question his affection for me. I was thoroughly assured, painfully certain, that his rank, and his connections, would be insuperable bars against his union with me; and when I reflected upon the probability of his marrying another woman, I was almost deprived of my reason.—I strove, it is true, to prepare my mind for such an event, but I strove in vain. If my Lord happened to be absent from me longer than usual, the emotions which I felt forcibly convinced me that life would not be desirable without his society.—Often did I wish, in my moments of despondence, that I had never known him, as fortune had, seemingly, prohibited an honourable alliance between us; but more frequently did I, when looking at his intelligent eyes, or listening to his melodious accents, bless the hour which first brought me acquainted with him.

While we were airing, one day, upon a common, a few miles distant from my Lord's house, a gentleman passed us on horseback, so strongly resembling Mr. Seymount, that a number of old ideas rushed into my mind, and I changed colour: not that I had ever really loved Seymount, I had only felt gratitude for him, but the remembrance of my mother's strange and cruel treatment, occasioned by the sight of him, affected me so powerfully that I could not conceal the agitation into which my spirits were thrown.

The sudden change in my countenance was instantly perceived by Lord Woodford. He looked at me, as if he would have penetrated

into my soul, and asked me if I was ill, if any thing had frightened me.

"I thought I saw Mr. Seymount pass by just now," said I, very innocently, as I had no intention to conceal the most secret movements of my heart.

"Mr. Seymount?" replied my Lord, starting at the name. "Do you know Mr. Seymount then?" added he, in some disorder.

"I once knew a gentleman of that name," replied I, ready to tremble, so violent were my emotions on seeing my Lord so much agitated.

My Lord imagining that those emotions had been occasioned by the sight of the gentleman who had passed us, said, "Don't be alarmed Miss Osgood: the person you saw was not Mr. Seymount, but he is very like him; however, pray be so kind as to inform me where you became acquainted with Mr. Seymount."

As I plainly perceived that my Lord interested himself about the affair, and appeared very anxious, I told him honestly every thing relating to my acquaintance with Mr. Seymount, not omitting his stratagem to have interviews with me in the character of a lover, undiscovered by mother.

My Lord was almost breathless while I spoke, so attentive was he to my little narrative, and hardly did he give me time to conclude it.

"And you loved this Seymount?" cried, he hastily.

"No, indeed, my Lord.—I only felt gratitude for him."

"Gratitude

"Gratitude?" answered he, repeating the word—"gratitude is nearly allied to a softer passion."

He stopped: he looked tenderly on me, and sighed: then, instantly frowning, he turned away his face, and looked out at the opposite window till we came home.

This sudden indifference pained me. I could not tell how to bear it, not being conscious of having deserved it. After having so minutely, and so sincerely related every thing I knew concerning Seymount, I thought my sincerity would have merited applause: little did I imagine that it would have excited disapprobation.

My Lord grew, at last, so pensive, and discontented, that I really began to fear I had, by some inadvertencies, offended him, and I could not help feeling myself seriously afflicted. Tears dimmed my eyes, and I could hardly restrain myself from weeping aloud.

My Lord, still attentive to me, still observing every look and motion, asked me, more than once, if I was indisposed. I answered in the negative.

"Why then are you so strangely dejected?—But I remember you have, undoubtedly, met with a great disappointment to day, and therefore, you are to be pitied"—added he, with a heavy sigh.

"What disappointment my Lord?" replied I, with an eager anxiety; "I expected nothing—I have nothing to expect."

The moment these words were out of my mouth, I wished to recall them.—I coloured like scarlet: I hung my head and trembled lest my Lord should misconstrue them; but

he did not : however, though he mistook my meaning, he, unfortunately for me put a construction upon my words which I had not apprehended.

With such apparent dissatisfaction, he replied, but not immediately—"If he was so deeply in love as you say, time may, possibly, work out something in your favour."

"I don't understand you, my Lord," said I, quite confused.

"No, madam?"—looking very serious; "cannot you hope that time may put Mr. Seymount into a situation to demand the favour of your hand?"

"Mr. Seymount?" exclaimed I, hastily—"I entertain no hopes of Mr. Seymount, my Lord; I never once thought about him."—Again my colour came—I threw down my eyes; my Lord's brightened exceedingly. A charming smile enlivened his fine features.

"Not think of Seymount?" said he, seizing my hand, in a transport; "did you not think of him, my dearest girl?—How egregiously have I been mistaken! But tell me, then," continued he, pressing my hand, "tell me, Fanny, of whom did you think?"

I was now obliged to be silent: I could not with propriety, declare my real sentiments, and I scorned to utter falsehoods:—I therefore, said nothing; but as my Lord sat hanging over me, and urging me to acquaint him with my secret thoughts, I, at last, ventured to look up in his face:—What he saw in mine I cannot tell, but, drawing my hand gently to his lips, he softly articulated, "Angelical girl!" and then, as if apprehensive of having said too much, let my hand drop, and averted his face.

I, ready

I, ready to faint, with the agitation which so tender a scene had produced, rose, and walked to the window—There a shower of tears instantly relieved my full heart. My back was towards him, but I could not, with all the efforts in my power, stifle the sighs, sighs arising from excessive satisfaction, which issued from my bosom; for I was thoroughly persuaded that I was beloved, and that prudential motives only prevented my Lord from telling me so in the tenderest terms.

My sighs alarmed him; he hurried to me; he caught my hand again—I turned away my eyes, but he saw the tears roll down my cheeks.

With an impassioned look, and with a tremulous voice, he cried, "Gracious Heaven! what do I behold? what means these tears?"

I broke from him, immediately: I dared not to trust myself with him, nor yet could I bear to give pain to that heart, which had just afforded me so much pleasure. I hastened out of the room, after having said, "Pray excuse me, my Lord, and do not ask the reason of my departure, or enquire into the cause of my tears: but be assured, that they flow from sensations too pleasing to be expressed.

With these words I ran up into my own apartment, and staid in it till supper was upon the table, tho' I heard him twice say, "Fanny, my dearest Fanny," with a loud, and imploring voice.

When I came down, we were both more composed. My Lord's behaviour was delicately affectionate. The evening flew away, tho' neither of us proceeded to an explanation of what had passed.—Never had my Lord appeared to me in so engaging a light; innumerable

were his winning ways, and it is impossible to describe the pains he took to render himself captivating.

The next day, tho' he was not less solicitous to please, he appeared far less happy; and as my happiness hung in a manner, upon his lips, whenever he was not chearful, I was, of course, dejected.

To increase my dejection, he told me, that he should, shortly, be confined to his own house with company.—“It will not be in my power to see you so frequently as I have done, Fanny,” added he, “but I shall ever think of you with the highest satisfaction, and sincerely regret the loss of your conversation.”

I bowed; but I felt very unhappy: accustomed as I had been to see him every day, and all the day, I could not hear of his intended absence from me, without being deeply touched; yet as I had so lately discovered, tho' involuntarily, to what a degree my heart doated on him, I was as much as possible upon my guard, lest any improper emotions should be visible. My Lord, I thought, seemed equally studious to suppress every affecting sensation.

When he went away at his usual hour, he did not particularly take leave of me; he only looked earnestly at me, and sighed.—Overwhelmed with a softened tenderness I could scarce lift up my eyes.

How heavily did the moments move in his absence! For a week I bore it as well as I could: I hardly lived: I meerly existed. I then had time enough to reflect upon the wretched condition of a kept mistress: in that light I almost felt myself, as I had not a single acquaintance in the world—While I enjoyed

joyed my Lord's company, I did not, indeed, wish for any other company: more company would have been rather disagreeable to me; but, when *he* was gone, I most impatiently longed for somebody to speak to, somebody to whom I could speak of *him*; the only man upon earth of whom I desired to talk.—If twenty persons had been in the house with me, I should not have ventured to mention him to one of them.

Having passed a melancholy week, without receiving a visit, or the slightest message from Lord Woodford, I concluded that he had judged it prudent to give me up; and that, not being willing to shock me by a formal adieu, he had separated himself from me for ever, in the least distressing manner he could think of.

Under the weight of this dispiriting apprehension, I could not, by any methods in my power, administer relief to my tortured mind: I could not help dwelling on those scenes which had yielded me the most exquisite delight: scenes, so *Fear* told me, never to return.—I lost my appetite—I could neither eat nor sleep: I grew pale, thin, and became most truly a miserable object.—Yet, tho' I had worked myself up to believe that my Lord would never see *me* again, I was still anxiously desirous of seeing *him*; and I could not refrain from wishing that if he *had* actually determined to forsake me, he would permit me to bid him a last farwel; even while I felt as if such a farewell would prove fatal.—I wanted, indeed, to thank him for what he had done for me; I wanted to return the presents which I had received from him; I wanted to leave the house

in which he had placed me, and to go to some other spot, where I might follow my drawing; but then I considered how difficult it would be to find a retreat free from the intrusion of Sir Thomas, or of my mother.—I was, in short, distracted with a multitude of alarming doubts, and my unhappiness was doubled every day by the continued absence of my Lord.

Wearied, at length, with the most disheartening conjectures, I determined, one day, to take a walk towards Lord Woodford's house, in order to discover, if I could, what had kept him so long from me.

I set out, alone, upon this expedition, that nobody might suspect my design, which was not to go to my Lord's house, but only to wander about the *environs*, in hopes of getting a sight of him, tho' only at a distance.—My scheme was doubtless equally foolish and indiscreet, and I suffered sufficiently for it.

I walked very fast, so impatient was I to see my Lord; and when I came near his grounds, walked on till I was ready to drop, without perceiving a single creature.

At last a fine spaniel, of which my Lord was very fond, bounded along towards me.

My heart jumped at the sight of the little animal, which I had frequently caressed, as I expected to see his master soon following him.

I was not mistaken; my Lord, in a short time made his appearance: but good Heaven! how did I feel when I beheld him with a very elegant woman, who leaned on his arm carelessly! He seemed to be earnestly talking to her.—My feelings at that moment are not to be described.—Jealousy took immediate possession

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sion of my heart. I was no longer at a loss to know why my Lord had withdrawn himself from me: the woman before me had evidently been a successful rival.—She was in the same attitude in which I had often appeared, and he treated her in a manner which forced me to remember, with the most cutting grief, the happy hours which I had spent by his dear side.—However, tho' I was on the point of expiring with jealousy and sorrow, I wished to have a near view of them, to see if his Lordship's companion was as handsome as, at my first glance, I thought her to be.—I wished, also, to know if she was so perfectly to my Lord's taste, as to secure him more firmly than I had been capable of doing. I wanted to hear her voice; to hear her sentiments, but I wanted still more to hear what he said to her; yet I knew not how to gratify my curiosity, without risking a discovery.—Besides, I was all over in such a trembling condition, that I could scarce support myself.

While I stood wavering, unable to determine how to act, they advanced: It was a long walk they were in, between two rows of horse chestnuts: there was a quickset hedge on one side of it, and also at the bottom, which had screened me from their eyes. I had on a black cloak and hat, and was, therefore, not a very conspicuous object. As they advanced, I stooped a little, and, peeping thro' the hedge, saw them both without any interruption.

Over my Lord's countenance a melancholy seriousness was spread. The Lady's lovely face—for she was very young and handsome—was enlivened by the most pleasing smiles. She was indeed so very agreeable a figure, that I

shrunk within myself.—I was not at all surprized at my Lord's attachment to so charming a creature.—Her dress, tho' only a morning one, was both elegant, and expensive. She eclipsed me as much in finery as she did in beauty.—I sighed deeply at the comparison which I could not help making in my own mind between us.—My Lord, indeed, frequently would have had me purchase rich clothes, but I always opposed him; yet my opposition did not hinder him from presenting several little ornaments, which I had determined to return to him before I saw the beautiful object which filled my heart with so much misery.

At length they turned about, to go towards the house, before I was able to get near enough to hear what they said. I stood till they were quite out of sight, after having strained my eyes to follow them.

As soon as I was deprived of the view of what had given me so much uneasiness, I attempted to go home, but I was incapable of moving: I sunk down upon the grass, overwhelmed with despair, and should have fainted, I believe, if a violent shower of tears had not relieved me a little.

I rose the moment I was in a condition to walk, tho' I could, willingly, have staid all day and all night on that spot: but as I was uncertain about their coming out again, and afraid of being discovered by any of my Lord's people, I resolved to return to a house which I could no longer look upon as mine.—I resolved, indeed, to leave it, when I had written a letter to my Lord, to acquaint him with my motives.—Yet, after all, what inducements

have

have I to run away from a house in which my Lord has placed me, and in which he maintains me as a person under his care? He had never told me that he had any view, in his behaviour to me, but to make me happy, and to secure me a decent provision; what business, then, have I to be offended, or grieved at his loving another woman? He has not directly, declared an inclination for me, and what reason have I to suppose he ever would? Not the least reason in the world: tho' I am sometimes encouraged to imagine, from his tender attentions and his generosity, that I am necessary to his happiness.—Do men usually behave to women whom they do not love, as my Lord did to me?—No, surely.—However, Lord Woodford has a very uncommon character.—He is benevolent, liberal and polite; he likes to chat with me, and to instruct me, but he certainly does not feel emotions in my favour, similar to those which he has raised in my foolish bosom. He is the most disinterested, the most amiable of men, and I cannot but love him.—Nay, tho' he has, weary of my company, attached himself to another woman, I cannot divest myself of my partiality for him—But how blameable am I to give way to it? how exceedingly wrong will be my behaviour, if I continue under obligations to a generous man, for which I can make no returns—no returns consistent with honour.—I have nothing but my affection to bestow; take away my tenderness and I am poor indeed!

Such were my reflections while I walked homewards. As soon as I arrived, fatigued, faint, and ready to sink to the ground, I took
up

up my pen, and began a letter to my Lord. I thanked him in the warmest terms for the protection he had afforded me, for the generosity with which he had distinguished me: I told him that he had been too generous, that his liberality had oppressed me, that I had it not, that I never should have it in my power to make the slightest return to the numberless favours he had conferred on me; adding that I was, therefore, determined to quit a sphere of life to which I had not the smallest pretensions, and to have recourse to the employment from which I might reasonably expect a decent subsistence.

I was then prevented from going on by a violent head-ach—my eyes had a mist before them: I was hot; extremely indisposed all over, and obliged to lean my head upon the table.—I could no longer sit upright.

Just at that instant, Nanny came in to ask me what I would please to have for my dinner, as I had not given any orders before I went out.

“I thought, Madam,” said she, “that you would have rung the bell before now.”

Raising my head slowly, I told her, “that I could not eat a morsel.”

The girl, being good natured, tried to persuade me to have a little broth, or some white wine whey; but I refused every thing: I abhorred every kind of food: I abhorred myself particularly, for not having had attractions sufficient to gain, and to keep Lord Woodford's heart. I was now certain that he had never felt the slightest inclination for me; and tho' I was very sensible that I ought to have esteemed him a thousand times the more for his disinterested

interested generosity, I could not bring myself to look upon him in the light I wished, and I seriously hated myself for my feelings.—But my head soon became so confused, that I could not reason about my sensations or my behaviour—I grew worse and worse, and was, in a short time put to bed in a violent fever.

I lay, several days, incapable of thinking at all. The first object I beheld, when my senses returned, was Lord Woodford sitting by my bedside, with looks expressive of the sincerest sorrow, and holding my hand in his.

To tell you what I felt at that transporting moment is impossible. Lifting up my eyes, I looked earnestly at my Lord, to be sure that I was not mistaken, and then closing them again, as even the little light in the room was too much for them, I fetched a deep sigh, and pressed his hand. He returned the pressure with additional warmth, and with a voice which was melody to my ears, cried, “Fanny; my dearest Fanny, tell me, are you better? speak to me if you can only one word of comfort: I would not disturb you, but if you knew what I have suffered on your account, it would, I dare believe, give your heart joy to relieve mine.”

What rapture did not those precious words convey to me?—Yet I could not articulate what I felt—the various emotions which I experienced, and my weakness together, prevented all utterance: but I caught his hand again, and put it to my forehead, to my lips, merely from a passionate fondness.—The heat of my hand made him exclaim,—“Good God? how you burn! Can nothing be done to remove this cruel fever?”

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That tender exclamation was of more service to me, than all the prescriptions of the *college* would have been—I grew better from that moment. I opened my eyes again, fixed them on the dear cause of the misery, both of body and mind, which I had endured, and said, with a feeble voice, “I shall be better soon, my Lord, if you wish for my recovery.”

“Wish, for it?” cried he in lively accents; “I wish for nothing but your health and happiness—Have you any doubts—how can you have any doubts concerning my regard for you?”

He spoke those few words with so musical a voice, and with so much earnestness, that I was charmed with them. I thanked him in the best manner I could: but I was not able to make acknowledgements adequate to my wishes.

In a few days, during which my Lord never left me, but when decency required his absence, I was surprizingly mended. I began to sit up.

My Lord carried me at first, from my bedside to the chair, till I was strong enough to walk, and then I leaned upon his friendly arm. Never was any creature more tenderly nursed, nor was ever any body more grateful. I really felt myself quite a new being, to see my Lord, when I had concluded, he had left me never to return, redouble his assiduities about me; to find myself the sole object of his tenderness, at a time when I believed he had entirely given me up for another.—The satisfaction which I enjoyed upon the occasion, almost deprived me of my senses. In short, I
could

could not check my raptures, and I doubtless surprized my lover by the frequent sallies of my gratitude: yet, tho' I imagined that I had great reason to be happy, I could not, now and then, help reflecting upon the scene which had thrown me into the disorder, which so nearly proved fatal to me, and was at the same time, naturally, desirous of knowing where that lady was whom I had seen so familiar with my Lord, and whether he had relinquished *her*, as he had, I fancied, abandoned *me*.—"Will he not go back to her again?" said I to myself—Whenever I thought about the lady, and I often thought about her: a train of melancholy ideas crowded into my mind—Sometimes tears forced a passage from my eyes, in spite of all my endeavours to restrain them.

One day, my Lord found me alone in the garden, attempting to dry my eyes before I made my appearance before him. Seizing my hand ere I apprehended his nearness to me, he said "What's the matter, my dear Fanny? Why do you strive to hide from your sincerest friend, a sorrow which still preys—with the greatest concern I see it—upon your tender spirits: a sorrow which was, I firmly believe, the cause of your late illness? With what affliction can you be oppressed, which may not be communicated to me, your guardian, who will, be assured, do every thing in his power to render you happy? Have I not reason Fanny, to complain of your want of confidence in me?"

That little reproach, delivered in the mildest manner, struck me to the soul, and forced the secret from my bosom, which I had resolved to bury in it for ever, as I was dreadfully afraid
of

of giving the least disgust to the man whom I loved to distraction.

Immediately thinking that he had been offended at my reserve, I burst into tears—"Do not, oh! do not be angry with me, my Lord," said I.—"I should have opened my heart to you before, had I not been fearful of making you angry."

"Angry, Fanny?" replied he gravely; "How is it possible for me to be angry with you? How little do you know me? Speak, therefore, and speak freely, my dearest girl; I may be sorry, I may be wretched because it is not in my power to make you happy, but I can never be angry with you,"

Here he stopped, waiting for my answer.

I blushed, trembled, and felt the extreme impropriety of telling him, that I had been distracted at his absence, that I had watched him, that I had, with the strongest jealousy, seen him with a lady in his park. Could a girl of the least delicacy, make such a disclosure to the man, who had never said, that he loved her, and whose rank in life prevented her from expecting honourable addresses from him?—I thought, therefore, that I should have expired with shame.

I sat silent for some time, covered with confusion—I longed, but I knew not how, to unbosom myself.

My Lord, perceiving my embarrassment, drew out of his pocket the piece of paper on which I had written, with a tremulous hand, a few lines to him, at the time I was taken sick; of which I often thought afterwards, but was always afraid to enquire about it.—Sometimes, indeed, I hoped that Nanny had
either

either destroyed it, or put it up in my writing box.

"This paper," said he, "I found upon your table, the day I rushed into your dressing-room, on having heard that you was very much out of order; and I will own that it has given me a great deal of uneasiness. Do you then, really, want to leave me, Fanny? Am I so exceedingly disagreeable to you, that all my endeavours to please cannot prove, in the least degree, successful? Are you, actually, so attached to Seymount, that you think you should behave injuriously with regard to *him*, by remaining any longer under *my* protection?"

He paused, after having, with much difficulty, delivered the above interrogations. I was ready to die with vexation, to think that he should still imagine it possible for me to love any man except himself.—I could not keep silent—I hastily cried out—tho' blushing excessively, at the same time—"How strangely, my Lord, you are still mistaken about me? I never *was* attached to Mr. Seymount, in the manner you apprehend, never *can* be so attached to him.—Were I but sure of your being as indifferent to the *lady*, who leant on your arm in the park, as I am to *him*—"

No sooner were those words out of my mouth, than I would have almost given my life to recall them. I clapped my hands before my eyes—I rose; and hurried towards the door.

My Lord stopped me, and in accents more lively than any I had yet heard, said, "Stay, Fanny, let us, at least, understand each other clearly: assure me that you do not love Seymount, and you shall have no reason to have

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an ill opinion of me: you cannot, certainly, have an ill opinion of me, for my affectionate behaviour to my sister."

A thunderbolt levelled at my head, could not have confounded me more.—I saw, I felt, how extremely ridiculous I had been with my jealousy: I was thoroughly ashamed to think how much I had, precipitately, done to lessen myself in his eyes. I was ashamed to look up to him: again I hurried towards the door—again he caught me in his arms.

"My dearest Fanny," said he, "stay, and suffer me to make both you and myself as easy as I can at present: stay and see the transports with which you have filled my heart by the involuntary emotions of your own. Sit down and listen to me."

"I complied, though my heart fluttered in such a manner, that I thought it would burst.

"Be composed, my dearest girl"—continued he, "and hope every thing by attending to me with patience.—I lost my father, the Earl of Woodford, when I was quite a lad: he left me and a sister, an infant also, to the care of the tenderest and best of mothers, who gave up all her future expectations in life—being young and handsome—in order to apply herself intirely to the education of her children—Those children, in return, endeavoured to behave to her with the greatest duty and affection: all our affection, and all our duty, she has hitherto deserved; yet there are situations, sometimes, in life, which are distressing to the best intentioned people in the world. My mother had, from her childhood, contracted a friendship with a lady of her own age and
rank,

rank, who, afterwards, married a Sir George Bromfield, and had by him a daughter, about two years before my sister was born.—As our mothers were intimate, we were frequently together, and as we grew up, Miss Bromfield, unfortunately for us both, preferred me to all the young people who offered themselves candidates for her esteem. The preference which she gave me was a favour to which I never aspired; but it happens, now and then, that what we seek for least, is soonest obtained—She took, indeed, such a fancy to me, that Sir George and Lady Bromfield in a short time, became desirous of an alliance between two families already united by the strictest friendship.—This alliance my mother mentioned to me, in a way which plainly discovered what joy it would afford her to call her friend's daughter *hers*. In reply, I told her, that I wished I had looked upon Miss Bromfield in the light in which I had the honour to appear to *her*, but that I felt no particular inclination for her.—I also told her, that I should, very cautiously, enter into the marriage-state, and that I, by no means approved of the present fashionable mode of matrimony: adding, that as I should make it a point to be constant to my wife, I would willingly, marry a woman whom I really loved, that I might have no inducement to wander from her.—I concluded with saying, that I had never seen the woman to whom I wished to be indissolubly united, and that I chose to remain unmarried, till I could alter my state without acting in opposition to the motions of my heart.—My mother finding me so averse to Miss Bromfield, said she would no longer press me to marry against my inclination, provided

I would

I would promise her never to marry a woman of low birth, however agreeable she might be in every other respect.—Little reflecting upon the nature of such a promise, at that time, I solemnly, most solemnly, assured her, that her request should be faithfully complied with. Satisfied with that assurance, she ceased to persecute me, and as I was very well contented with what I had done, my heart was perfectly easy.—Perfectly easy was my heart, till the morning Hyam brought me to see you. I was instantly struck with the elegance of your person, and with the enchanting simplicity of your manner; I soon found you were with strangers, and obliged to work for a subsistence. I was exceedingly shocked at the appearance of things and still more so, when, on the rapid progress of my passion for you, I considered, that my mother would strongly object to the lowness of your station.—Being desirous also of placing you above dependence, I could not help urging you to occupy this small house, which I had, some time before, purchased, on account of the wholesomeness of its situation.—You remember, with what firmness you refused my offer: however, I proceeded to furnish it, and to make it ready for an inhabitant.—Coming one day to see you, the woman, with whom whom you lodged, intercepted me upon the stairs, and gave me no little encouragement to hope for her assistance in carrying on any design against you.—Her infamous alacrity alarmed me extremely. I thought, indeed, so much about your dangerous situation, that I had no rest, when I was absent from you: and it was *fear*, which hurried me to call upon you the night you were forced away.—Happily, I overtook

overtook you; happily. I brought you hither. You cannot but be sensible Fanny, that I never took advantage of the confidence you reposed in me, but you do not know with what transports I gazed on your growing beauties; with what heart-felt delight I listened to your charming conversation. Your discretion, your modesty, your delicacy,—your every female excellence I saw enraptured, and I died with desire, to tell you how extravagantly I doated on you—Yet, certain as I was, at the same time, that my mother would make objections extremely unwelcome to my ears, I was deterred from speaking: I was fearful of increasing *your* disquiet as well as my own. I fancied also (impelled by vanity, perhaps) that you beheld me in a favourable light, and that nothing but your innate diffidence, your exquisite discreetness, prevented you from discovering your sentiments in my behalf—Nor had I any doubts concerning your partial sentiments, till the evening you imagined you saw Seymount pass us.—Your agitation then filled me with inexpressible anxiety—I looked upon *him*, as the favoured lover—When I urged you, however, to acquaint me with the cause of it, I was soon most pleasingly convinced how much I had been mistaken.—Just when I was beginning to feel myself truly happy, because intirely persuaded that my passion for you was returned, I was informed by my mother, that she and my sister would come and stay with me a few days. At any other juncture, I should have been highly pleased with the intended visit, but such a visit, when I had flattered myself, that I had made the wished-for impression upon you, threatened a separation inconceivably disagreeable to me; indeed I dreaded it; yet I could not
possibly,

possibly, extricate myself from so embarrassing an affair, without creating suspicions which might have proved prejudicial to us both: I, therefore, left you at a time when I would have given the world to have staid with you. I even did not think it proper to send or to write to you, lest the servants should chatter amongst themselves. I thought it better to wait till my mother left me, tho' I did the greatest violence to my inclination, by acting in that manner—My mother, while she staid with me, perpetually launched out in Miss Bromfield's praise, and failed not frequently to tell me, that, as *she* had set her heart upon me, a disappointment, would in all probability, be attended with melancholy, if not fatal consequences. I affected to laugh off what I heard, and imputed it to the wild fancies of a romantic girl. On the day when your curiosity, your *love*, let me add, unfortunately, led you to come in search of me, Fanny, I was walking in the park with Lady Ann, who declared to me, seriously, that Miss Bromfield was actually supposed to be in a decline, and that her declining health was attributed to her prepossession for *me*: adding, that sympathetic feelings alone, on my side, would probably save her life.—Infinitely as I preferred *you*, to all the women in the world, I was, I own, exceedingly distressed to hear that any innocent person should have a moment's uneasiness on *my* account—The solemnity which my sister had thrown into my face, by her disclosure, with regard to Miss Bromfield, only excited her mirth: She rallied me prodigiously upon the occasion, and with her raillery, mixed a great many displeasing particulars concerning Miss Bromfield's

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Bromfield's inclination for me—My sister kept me walking a considerable time, but little did I think you were so near; tho', while I listened to details about the tender sensations of another woman, my thoughts were entirely fixed on *you*—I wished to know how you did, what were your sentiments concerning me, how you employed yourself during my absence, and if that absence was not painful to you—So anxious, indeed, was I before the close of the next day, that I dispatched John, who had been used to attend me hither, with a little note, to enquire after your health, and to let you know how much I longed to see *you*.—What was my astonishment, what was my concern, when he brought me back the paper unopened, and informed me, that you were in a violent fever, and quite insensible!—I forgot, immediately, my mother and sister, and flew hither without bidding them farewell. The condition I found you in, almost unhinged my reason, and I was incapable of leaving you till I saw you out of danger; and now my joy on your recovery, and on the partiality which you have discovered in my favour, is so excessive, that I shall not be able to separate myself from you again.—Yet, tell me Fanny, and tell me truly, what you meant by that letter; tell me why you wanted to desert me, and why you said you could never make returns for the favours you have received from me—Indeed, my sweet girl, you never received any favours from me: I pleased myself, I am sure, full as much, if not more, than I pleased you, by all my trifling endeavours to be serviceable to you.—Why then, Fanny, should you think of making me wretched by depriving me of the pleasure of seeing you and conversing with you?"

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I had wept almost from the beginning of the above speech; at the conclusion of it, my tears became violent, and I hastened to reply: with a faltering voice, I just was able to say, "Oh my Lord, do not think so unkindly of me; nor believe it possible for me to endure to see you wretched. Freely would I lay down my life to procure *you* felicity."

I could not proceed.

"Be composed, my dear girl," said he, pressing my hands; "do not, at present, think of any thing that can disquiet you. I will ask no more questions now: by and by you will, I am sure you will, remove all my doubts."

"They shall be removed directly," answered I—"Jealous of the charming lady, who is, you tell me, your sister, I determined to leave you. Will you pardon, my Lord, a resentment of which I am heartily ashamed? I am thoroughly sensible of my weakness, but I, at the same time, abhor deceit."

"Do not call it weakness, Fanny," replied he, "unless you will allow it to be a most amiable one—When jealousy proceeds from love it is certainly to be forgiven: and you have, by your apprehensions, with regard to my constancy, rendered yourself a thousand times more dear to me than ever. It gives me, however, great pleasure, to think that if you quit my house, you will not be obliged to labour again for a subsistence: for I have secured you three hundred a year."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed I, quite overwhelmed with love and gratitude, "What will become of me?—My good God! Teach me,

me, direct me how to return such generous affection."

"Rise, my Fanny," said my Lord, tenderly straining me to his bosom, for I had thrown myself on my knees—"Rise: let me dry up those tears: let me assure you, that you shall never feel another jealous pang on *my* account: I will be yours, and only yours, in the most honourable manner.—I only beg for time to prevail on my mother to yield, with some sort of grace, to my wishes: you cannot love me less for being willing to prove myself a good son to a mother, who is, in every other respect, the kindest imaginable: when she becomes acquainted with your excellent disposition, she will I hope as earnestly desire an alliance with you, as I do.—Promise me, therefore, my dearest Fanny, to make yourself intirely easy, and to love me as affectionately as ever.—I will never abuse your indulgence: I will pay a proper respect to your delicacy, and your discretion, but I cannot exist without your tendernefs."

Quite overcome, quite softened by so delightful a declaration, I promised him every thing he could desire, and he, from that hour, seemed to have received new life. He adored me, but he behaved to me like a man of sense and honour; he treated me as a woman who was, every way, his equal, who was, one day, to share his rank and fortune.—As to myself, I would not say too much, my dear friend, in my own praise, but I had so very high an opinion of my Lord's understanding, and principles, that I almost deified him.—Frequently did I, after having conversed with him upon different subjects, so strongly feel my own deficiencies,

ciencies, that I could not help wondering at his condescension in spending so many hours with me.—Sometimes I fancied, that as he had, from his affectionate regard for me, taken a great deal of pains to raise me above the generality of my sex, he had actually rendered me superior to them. Yet, flattered as I was with my lord's condescending carriage, I always behaved to him with the utmost humility: with a humility, indeed, which often induced him to say, "That my deference to him was carried too far; and that it prevented me from discovering so much tenderness for him as I should have otherwise done;" but I assured him, that his apprehensions were groundless, and that my love for him could not be increased.

For about a fortnight after my recovery, we continued the happiest of people: Lord Woodford scarce bestowed a thought on his mother, though I more than once mentioned my lady to him, and asked him, "If he would not go and see her."

"You want then," said he one day, "to send me from you, Fanny?"

"Far from wishing to part with you, my Lord, I cannot express the pain I should feel in your absence; but we cannot be too dutiful, we cannot have too great an affection for deserving parents."

"Sweet girl! How would my mother doat on you, were she to hear you talk thus! And yet she pays so much regard to the sentiments of a foolish world, that I am afraid not all your uncommon merit, would correct her improper way of thinking, under the influence of false pride. Besides, her strong attachment

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to the child of her friend, will, doubtless, prompt her to oppose my wishes."

At last, however, I persuaded my Lord to make her Ladyship a visit; he had determined to set out the next morning, and to return the following day, when a letter brought to him that very evening, obliged him to take another route—An uncle, by his father's side, had been suddenly indisposed at his house in Derbyshire, and desired to see him immediately.

My Lord was concerned, and distressed on the perusal of that letter: he very much esteemed his uncle, and was very unhappy at the thoughts of leaving *me*, for a longer time than he had designed. But submission was absolutely necessary, and we separated with mutual regret.

The departure of my Lord threw me into a melancholy, which I could, by no means, shake off. In vain did I fly from one kind of employment to another; my books, my needle, my pencil, my musick, and my garden, were equally insufficient to afford me any sort of consolation. As I had lost my dear companion, every thing seemed to remind me the more forcibly of my forlorn situation.

On the second day of his departure, I sat down to the organ, and attempted to while away the time, and to amuse my mind by playing a favourite song of my Lord's. When I was in the middle of that song, Tom came and informed me, that a lady desired to speak with me.

Imagining that my mother had by chance found me out, I was in no small flutter: though I should have been rejoiced, indeed,

to see *her*, had I not been afraid of her attempting to carry me to Sir Thomas.—However, I endeavoured to compose myself, in order to receive the lady, who came in a hired post-chaise, and, according to Tom's description of her, I was really induced to expect my mother's appearance: but how shall I express the awe with which I was struck, when I beheld a graceful figure between forty and fifty enter the room! She had a very genteel air, and such a dignity in her deportment, that I felt my own littleness in a very mortifying manner: I absolutely shrunk into myself.—My eyes were turned towards every part of the room in a thousand directions, as if dazzled by the majestic object before them.—My arms dropped, and I wished to hide myself in the most obscure part of the house. I was soon roused, however, by the stranger's melodious, yet commanding voice.

"Are *you* Miss Osgood?" said she.

I started at the question; I ventured to look up, and had the flattering satisfaction to see a soft smile in the countenance of the lady who spoke to me, in which I had before perceived nothing but seriousness and severity.—The transition was so favourable, I thought, that I was encouraged to answer her; yet I was embarrassed.—I could not bring myself to utter a falsehood, before a person who appeared to be the picture of truth; I, therefore, hesitated a little.

"Is not your name Osgood?" said she, again, with an impatience mixed with anxiety.

At length I stammered out—"Yes, madam."

"And

"And you are placed in this house by Lord Woodford?"

By the manner in which she spoke those few words, she galled me extremely; for she uttered them rather contemptuously.—With more haughtiness than usual, I replied—"Lord Woodford who is my guardian, Madam, and who has a right to direct me, thought proper to place me here."

"Your guardian?" replied she, much agitated; "No, Miss; Lord Woodford is not your guardian, and if he has taken any pains to make you believe he is, he has deceived you; but I rather imagine his design is to impose upon *me*, and that he wishes to conceal the *mistress* under the title of the *ward*. However, that scheme will not answer his purpose; I am very well acquainted with the nature of your connections with Lord Woodford, and I am come to insist upon your breaking them off."

I was exceedingly hurt by the peremptory delivery of the above speech; particularly so at being suspected to be Lord Woodford's mistress.—Such language, and from a stranger too, was, I thought very impertinent, not to say insolent.—I replied, therefore, with still more haughtiness—"I do not understand this way of talking, Madam. By what authority do you treat me with so grating a familiarity? By what authority do you dictate to me in so despotical a tone?—You certainly do not know me; if you did, you never would suppose me capable of being the character you have, too hastily, mentioned.—My pride is shocked, at the injurious imputation—I am, I confess, under considerable obligations to Lord Woodford: he

has protected me with the utmost humanity: he is the most generous, the most amiable of men, and has too high a sense of honour to attempt to seduce a poor girl, whom chance pointed out to him as an object entitled to his compassion."

Towards the latter end of my speech, I was so melted, that I could hardly articulate my words, and at the close of it, burst into tears.

"Lord Woodford is, certainly, a man of honour and generosity," replied the Lady, somewhat softened, "but as I must conclude from the warmth with which you have mentioned him, that you are very much attached to him, at least, pray how long do you think you can hold out against the compassion and liberality of such a man, as Lord Woodford?"

"A question, in which so injurious an insinuation is couched," said I, "requires no answer.—A woman who is determined to be virtuous, will not be seduced by any man in the world; and she who is under the protection of Lord Woodford, need not be under any apprehensions with regard to her character."

"Fine romantic notions," replied she, with a scornful smile; "but you are mistaken—A woman's character is always in danger with the man whom she loves if—"

Provoked at her sarcastical behaviour, I could no longer bear it, but, interrupting her, said with some vehemence; "It is of no consequence to *you*, Madam, whether I am mistaken or not; you are quite a stranger to me,

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me, and, therefore, I should be glad to be left to myself."

"Undoubtedly, you will be glad to get rid of me," replied the lady, "but however disagreeable my company may be to you"—added she, with additional dignity, the mother of Lord Woodford might be treated with a little more ceremony, at least by a girl who owns herself obliged to her son."

No words can describe what I endured at that instant.—My astonishment was excessive—My heart was smote with contrition, and I felt myself the meanest, the most abject of all human beings. I should have been humbled before the mother of the man whom I adored, had I not spoken so very freely before her, but when I reflected upon what I had uttered, my shame and my sorrow were beyond expression. I was shrunk to nothing, overwhelmed with confusion on having degraded myself—tho' unknowingly—in the eyes of the very person whom I most wished to please—I could only expect relief from the humanity of her, who was the dearest relation, the parent of the man on whom my soul doated.

In so awkward, so distressing a situation, what could I have said? I said nothing. I threw myself on my knees before her; just raised my weeping eyes, and then casting them down on the floor, cried, with uplifted hands, "Pardon me, my Lady, pardon a poor girl, who was ignorant of your rank; and who wishes most earnestly to make her conduct approved of by your ladyship."

For a moment she viewed me, filled with sorrow, and in a supplicating attitude, without opening her lips, then holding out her hand,

she said, with an encouraging complacence in her face, "Rise, and learn from this time, to behave respectfully to every body, lest you shou'd be deficient in politeness to those who have a right to expect it from you—A forward, familiar carriage, in young people, should be speedily corrected, but a general civility is always to be applauded."

I intreated her Ladyship again and again to pardon the error of which I had been guilty, and apologized for the impropriety of my behaviour to her, by telling her, "that she had quite disconcerted me with her suspicions."

"Every body," replied she, "must suppose you to be Lord Woodford's mistress, while you live with him, while you are supported by him, while he spends so much of his time with you."

I hung my head, abashed, and was silent: there was but too much truth in what she had uttered.

"And indeed," continued she, "if you have, hitherto, preserved your virtue, you will not long preserve it: it cannot be perfectly safe, while you are so dangerously situated; after having been attacked"—

"Indeed, Madam," replied I, eagerly interrupting her, "it never has been attacked by Lord Woodford."

"No, child?—For what purpose does he keep you here then?"

"From the most humane motives imaginable," answered I: "from the noblest, the most disinterested generosity. I was distressed to the greatest degree; I was cruelly abandoned by her, who should have done every thing in her power to keep my virtue out of the

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way of danger, instead of laying snares for the violation of it; I was betrayed into the hands of an infamous old man, by a mercenary—would I could not add—mother—On the point of being shamefully sacrificed to *that* man, I was saved from ruin by your son, Madam, who is the most virtuous, the most amiable of men.”

Here I stopped.—My tears flowed so fast, they almost blinded me: yet I perceived a glow of satisfaction in Lady Woodford’s cheeks, occasioned by my having mentioned his Lordship in such favourable terms; a kind of pity also, blended with curiosity, appeared in her countenance. “Compose yourself,” said she. “If what you have told me, is to be depended upon, you are to be compassionate, but—”

“Indeed, madam,” replied I, earnestly, I have never been accustomed to deceive any body. My mother spared no pains in my education.—While she was attentive to my acquiring the fashionable accomplishments, she strongly inculcated filial obedience, and urged me early to speak truth upon all occasions, that she might always rely upon what I said.”

Lady Woodford looked, with her eyes fixed, at me, during the above speech—I had, I plainly saw, engaged her attention, and was, therefore, willing to avail myself of appearances in my behalf,—but I was still so awed by her, that I could not venture to say what I longed to articulate. She, at length, relieved me, by asking me, “how it was possible for a mother to behave in the manner I had described.”

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I replied,

I replied, "that I could only relate things as they had happened."

"Sit down," said she—for I had risen from my seat in much disorder—"and tell me every thing relating to you till you came hither."

I obeyed, and entered upon my little narrative with spirit, because I flattered myself that I should remove all the suspicions her Ladyship had harboured against me. I related, succinctly, all that had passed concerning me, till the day I became jealous of my Lord; but I chose to conceal the rise and progress of my jealousy for many obvious reasons.

My Lady listened to me with great attention, and complacency: and several transitions were observable in her features, as she was differently affected by several parts of my story.

When I had ceased to speak, she said, with a particular benignity in her countenance, "I thank you, Miss Osgood, for your narrative; I hope I may, I believe I may depend upon your veracity."

"You may indeed, my Lady," said I.

"Tell me then, with the same sincerity and frankness, what plan you have formed for your future subsistence."

I blushed, and assured her that I had never thought of any; that I had only intended to return to my old employment, to my drawing. "I am very sensible, Madam," added I, "that I ought to return to it, but I am exceedingly afraid that it will throw me into dangerous situations."

"Your fears are well founded," replied she; "however, when you come to reflect seriously, you

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you will think your situation here far from being safe."

I started; looked surprized, and plainly told her, "I never had thought in that manner."

"I will venture to give you credit for that declaration," said she; "you think you are perfectly secure under my son's protection but your ignorance is the foundation of your satisfaction—you are totally unacquainted with the nature of these connections, and, therefore, I will now make it clear to you how erroneous your conduct has been.—You have frankly and honestly confessed, that you love my son, and you are strongly induced to believe that he loves *you*. Well then; can you suppose that two such people, in the prime of life, and possessed of the greatest sensibility, always with each other, and perpetually endeavouring to render themselves mutually agreeable, will be for ever capable of resisting the impulses of nature and inclination? No, Fanny.—You may imagine what you please, but a time will come when love—or most probably nature—will throw you quite off your guard. The desire of gratifying the wishes of the man for whom you feel a violent affection, will overpower your virtue; or else you will flatter yourself that it is more meritorious to please *him*, to whom you have been under so many obligations, than to preserve the purity of your character, by refusing to make him happy.—But you will, by acting in consequence of so false a way of thinking, too soon be convinced of your indiscretion, and you will most probably, after the sacrifice of your virtue to your love, spend the remainder of your
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days in all the bitterness of repentance. Many good and innocent girls, Fanny, have been undone by their romantic notions about the *tender passion*; and in proportion to the absurdity of their ideas concerning *female honour*, have been their subsequent sufferings."

I listened with attention—I was struck with the picture of a girl who might tho' very virtuously disposed, be undone; be ruined even from the purity of her principles: yet I thought, at the same time, that I should never be duped out of my honour by mine, because I firmly believed that Lord Woodford would not unfairly avail himself of my disinterested prepossessions in his favour.—I was in no small agitation, however: I felt extremely embarrassed—I trembled.

Lady Woodford, seeing me touched, proceeded in the following manner: "Every woman ought to shudder, to think of the loss of her virtue. I will not suppose that you have any design to give Lord Woodford an opportunity to triumph over yours; but it is natural for me to imagine, that you may be prompted, in an unguarded moment, by a desire to increase his love for you, to give him improper advantages. — Consider, therefore, child, that no man can esteem the woman whom he keeps as a mistress, tho' he may appear to have an affection for her; and that love, without esteem, cannot be of a long duration."

I heard her attentively, and I was convinced: but how to give up the society of a man so extremely amiable, so deservedly dear to me! that difficulty still remained.—However,

I assented

I assented to all that Lady Woodford said to me.

“ Well, then, child,” replied she, “ what steps do you intend to take?—You are in the greatest danger *here*: you own, yourself, that you should be exposed to many ineligible trials by returning to your old employment—I have thought of a scheme to save you from any hazardous situations. You are very young, Fanny, you have an attractive person, a good understanding, and, I am willing to hope, an honest, sincere heart: these, it must be confessed, are considerable qualifications, but you, certainly, have sense enough to know, that you are not a proper match for Lord Woodford.”

“ I am very sensible of the truth of what you say, madam,” replied I, with the humblest tone—“ I never dared to encourage such an aspiring idea.”

“ You will candidly allow,” answered she, “ that the prodigious disproportion between you, with regard to birth and fortune, is sufficient to prevent an union; but there are several reasons to be urged against it. Yet as I perceive a great deal of merit in you, and as I think your case particularly affecting, I am inclined to take you under *my* protection. I will place you with a very intimate friend of mine; I will furnish you with money enough to make a genteel appearance: in time, if you continue deserving of encouragement, you may be settled more to your satisfaction: but you must promise me, previously, never to see my son.”

I did not exceedingly like the first proposal, tho’ it was a very generous one, and advantageous:

tageous: when my promise was demanded, with regard to Lord Woodford, I changed colour; my heart throbbed; I thought I should have fainted. At last, a shower of tears relieved me. I sobbed aloud—I was almost distracted at the thoughts of never seeing Lord Woodford. My Lady remained silent for some minutes, till she saw my grief beginning to subside; she then, with a voice full of mildness and compassion, said; “You love my son, Miss Osgood.”

“More than my life”—Those were the words I immediately uttered, with eagerness, tho’ I could not, without difficulty, articulate them.

Availing herself of my words, she replied, with equal eagerness, “As you love him so sincerely, you will, certainly, be desirous of doing every thing to make him happy.”

“Undoubtedly,” said I, still sobbing.

“Well then—you can only ensure his future felicity, by never seeing him again. This prohibition may shock you just now, but you will, hereafter, be convinced of the propriety of it. Absence is the only cure for an ill-placed inclination: You cannot think, seriously, of being married to Lord Woodford: the disproportion between you, I repeat it, is too considerable to be obviated: privately as you have been brought up, you can have no idea of the disagreeable consequences with which an alliance between you would, most probably, be attended: but supposing all these obstacles to be removeable, my son has been long engaged to make his addresses to an amiable young lady, every way suitable to him, who is actually at this time in an ill state of health, because she is neglected

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neglected by him: consider, therefore, what an injury you will do to Lord Woodford, by taking any measures to keep up a connection with him, tho' in the most honourable manner: by so doing, you will not only hinder him from settling himself very desirably, in every shape, you will also be accessary to the death of a valuable young person, who has been trained up to look upon *him* as the man destined for her husband. She never entertained an irregular, a romantic passion for him, but in conformity to the wishes of her relations, studied to render herself worthy of the man, whom *they* recommended to her choice: Now as I well knew the risques which young women, especially women of family, ran by a brilliant marriage, as rank and fortune give young men of fashion so many opportunities to gratify their capricious fancies, I took particular care to endeavour to make my son sensible of the treasure he would possess in a good wife; and, at the same time, tried to convince him how very injurious to that wife, his conduct would be if he only *neglected* her. Happily, I found Lord Woodford, as he advanced to years of maturity, paid due respect to my admonitions, and discovered affectionate attentions, which cannot but be highly in his favour, whenever he enters into the marriage state. The young lady, therefore, who has, with the approbation of those who have a right to dispose of her, preferred *him*, ought to be preferred *by* him to all her sex: how cruelly will he behave, if he refuses her! and how much unmerited affliction shall I occasion to a family with whom I have lived, from the first commencement of

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our acquaintance, in the strictest friendship! a few reflections on your own, and on Lord Woodford's situation, must render the extreme impropriety of your continuing to encourage Lord Woodford's visits unquestionable.—By a little consideration, you will also be aware of the fatal consequences necessarily to be apprehended from his partiality in your behalf.—Let me, then, prevail on you, to give up all thoughts of my son, my dear Fanny: let me have reason, from your compliance with my wishes, to call you so, and to esteem you more and more every day: give me your word, that you will make no attempts to see Lord Woodford, that you will not correspond with him, that you will oppose all the steps he may take either to write to you, or converse with you.”

I sat almost stupified with grief while my lady was speaking, and when she stopped, felt myself absolutely incapable of making any reply.

She looked at me, for a few moments, and seemed to pity me exceedingly. Then, rising, said, “Come, Miss Osgood, strive to conquer this weakness—I cannot give it a harsher name—Have recourse to your reason, and suffer me to convey you immediately to this friend I have mentioned, who will treat you with as much affection and deference as if you were related to me.”

I sighed, but I could not speak.

Advancing towards me, she said, taking me by the hand, “Come, Fanny, summon up a little resolution.—The carriage, which brought me, is at the door; we will ring the bell, and order your maid to send your cloaths after you.”

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I started: I shrunk from her touch——
 “What, leave Lord Woodford,” cried I,
 “without letting him know my design; without writing to him, without preparing him, in the least, for my departure? No——”Tis impossible. Leave *him* who has done so much for me?—my deliverer?—my protector?—my friend? It must not—cannot be.”

“It must, indeed,” answered my lady. “If you have the least spark of gratitude, if you in any degree attempt to return the friendship he has discovered for you, fly from him immediately; give him not the pain of bidding you farewell.”

“O, Madam,” replied I, half breathless, so violently was I agitated; “If he loves me, will he not suffer, cruelly suffer, if I leave him in so clandestine a manner?—I can never consent to it—I am dying at the thoughts of it.”

“Think no more about it,” said she, “but act at once: imagination, upon these occasions, generally affects us too much; I am, therefore, the more unwilling to have you leave any note or letter for my son: he will only brood over it, and doubly regret your departure.”

In vain I opposed this obstinacy, as I thought it, in Lady Woodford; in vain I begged, and intreated her to stay till I had just told him that I was going with his mother. She would not permit me: she would not hear me.—Overpowered, at last, by her plausible arguments, and flattering promises, I suffered myself to be led to the chaise.

As soon as I found that the horses went at a prodigious rate, I could not restrain my agonies—I was almost frantic to see myself carried

ried farther and farther, from the man whom I so fondly loved, whom I so highly valued. I screamed; I absolutely frightened Lady Woodford, who caught hold of me, and earnestly conjured me to compose myself.

"Compose myself, madam?"—cried I—
"Can I possibly compose myself, when I am torn, for ever, from the most amiable of men?—Oh madam! I cannot leave him—'tis impossible."

"Hush, hush, child," replied she, pressing me to her bosom, with looks in which terror and pity, alternately, appeared—"Don't alarm yourself—You make me feel for my son."

"Oh! Madam," answered I, weeping, "*you*, even *you*, who are his mother, cannot feel for him more than I do."

With great difficulty, she, at length, prevailed on me to be calm—I felt myself, indeed, almost lifeless from fatigue: I sat like a person deprived of sense, without motion: I sighed violently.—Every now and then, my lady took hold of my hand, and asked me "how I did," speaking very kindly, tho' she received no answers from me.

At last we arrived in London.—The streets were crowded, but the people I beheld, did not, in the least, engage my attention. There was but *one* person in the world whom I wished to see, and I had no hopes of ever seeing *him* again.—Dreadfully painful were my emotions, when I reflected upon my hopeless situation.

When we stopped at Mrs. Stephens's, the lady with whom I was to live, they were obliged to carry me out of the chaise; I trembled so much, that I could scarce set my feet to the ground.

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I was led into a parlour, in which a very agreeable middle-aged woman received me, with great complacency in her countenance, and that complacency seemed to increase, on her finding me really distressed. She, immediately, endeavoured to alleviate my sorrow by a gentleness of manners, and a soothing behaviour, to which I could not, tho' deeply afflicted, be inattentive.—Perceiving that I was almost suffocated by my grief, she placed me in an elbow chair, called for a glass of wine and water with a few drops, and, in very affectionate accents, pressed me to swallow a little, telling me, it would relieve me extremely.

Lady Woodford, with great goodnature, joined in her request: I then complied, and found momentary ease. My sorrow was not abated, but I strove to keep it down as much as possible while her Ladyship stayed.

When she rose up to go, she took me by the hand, and intreated me to try to banish all disquieting ideas, assuring me, at the same time, that she would be my friend. She then asked me, softly, if I wanted any money.

I replied in the negative. I sighed to think that Lord Woodford had amply supplied all my wants, and that I was to be separated from him for ever. Bursting into tears, I exclaimed, "Oh my God! what do I suffer! and what misery will not the most generous of men endure when he hears that I have quitted him so abruptly!"

Lady Woodford hurried away as soon as I had uttered these words—She was feelingly affected by them.

